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An investigation of Virginia school leaders' knowledge and perceptions regarding the impact of the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on school safety and professional development

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An Investigation of Virginia School Leaders' Knowledge and Perceptions Regarding the
Impact of the Discipline Provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on
School Safety and Professional Development

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

By

Charlotte Hardison Worley

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Impact of the Discipline Provisions of the 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education
Act on School Safety and Professional Development

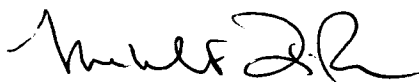
A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the School of Education
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

By

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The College of William and Mary

April 12, 2006



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Dedication

My doctoral program has truly been one of the most satisfying endeavors of my life. I have been afforded rich opportunities for professional and personal growth, enjoyed the historical and academically rigorous culture of The College of William and Mary in Virginia by “walking where Thomas Jefferson walked,” and have received a world-class education through the commitment and efforts of so many wonderful professors and colleagues. To them I dedicate this dissertation.

Tom, J.J., and Travis, my husband and sons and Jessica, my darling daughter-in-law, have brought me laughter, joy, and daily reasons to celebrate a rich and spiritual life. My delight and appreciation of their gifts of love and support are endless. Without those selfless gifts, I could not have attempted such a daunting endeavor and dedicate this dissertation to them.

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Abstract

This research examined the knowledge level and perceptions of 300 randomly selected school leaders in the Commonwealth of Virginia concerning the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97). The overarching questions answered in the study were 1) to what extent are school leaders aware of the existing discipline provisions of IDEA 97 which have been in place since 2001 and 2) how do school leaders view the impact of those provisions on their ability to maintain a safe learning environment for all?

Findings resulted in one significant difference ($p < .05$) among school leaders in the sub-domain of Knowledge. Elementary leaders reported a significantly lower level of knowledge regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 than did their middle school peers. School leaders across knowledge domains and school levels reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 did not negatively impact their ability to maintain safe schools. Moreover, professional development was identified by school leaders in the study as a high need to manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 across all school levels.

Chapter 1: The Problem

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

School leaders of the 21st century face ever-mounting challenges. Gone are the days when school leaders were primarily expected to be good stewards of the resources of the school districts. Today's school leaders are expected to be exemplary educators who understand learning theory, promising instructional pedagogy, refined leadership practices, and federal and state regulations concerning the education of students with disabilities (Bateman & Bateman, 2001; Cypress, 2003; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Jacobs, Tonnsen, & Baker, 2004; Maag & Katsiyannis, 2000; Patterson, Marshal, & Bowling, 2000; Williams & Katsiyannis, 1998).

The charge of school today's school leaders is rife with complex challenges, and one of the most difficult of these challenges is to ensure a safe environment for all students while being responsible for enhancing student achievement, promoting standards-based reforms, and managing school discipline (Rose & Gallup, 2005; Skiba & Peterson, 1999 2000; Skiba, Ritter, Peterson, Miller, & Forde, 2002). This challenge is magnified by the requirements mandated by the discipline provisions of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97) (Bias, 2002; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, ; Maag & Katsiyannis, 2000; Yell & Rozalski, 2000).

This challenge is not a new one. "For more than a quarter of a century, school leaders have been challenged to meet both the intent and the spirit of federal laws regarding the education of students with disabilities" (Turnbull & Cilley, as cited in DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003, p. 5). During the same time period, the United States has embraced school

reform initiatives designed to make public schools more rigorous learning environments (Boscardin, 2005; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Thurlow, 2002) thereby magnifying the challenges related to the requirements of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran; Patterson, et al., 2000; Sage & Burello, 1994; Shaul, 2001).

Faced with these complex and multifaceted challenges, school leaders often feel unprepared for their roles in the administration of special programs in their schools (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Goor, Schwenn, & Boyer, 1997; Hirth & Valesky, 1989 1991; North Central Regional Education Laboratory [NCREL], 2003a; Witt, 2003). Many school leaders report that the requirements for administering special education are cumbersome and complex (Shaul, 2001). Additionally, a review of the literature reveals that many perceive the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 as a confounding duality—one set of rules for students with disabilities and another for those without disabilities (Evans, 1999; Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000; Sage & Burello, 1994; Shaul, 2001; Smith, 1997; Yell, 1998)--thus further challenging their efforts to maintain safe, orderly environments for students and staff while fostering enhanced achievement for all students.

The Individuals with Disabilities Act was enacted to assist states in meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities via federal funding of state efforts (Yell, 1998). The IDEA, formerly known as the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act (EAHCA), was the most significant federal law affecting the education of students with disabilities. Prior to 1975, no such federal law existed, and students with disabilities were often excluded from public schools in alarming numbers. The enactment of EAHCA (P.L. 94-142) dramatically impacted the educational rights of students with disabilities. Since the

1997 Reauthorization of IDEA, school leaders have been faced with a new set of rules and restrictions for disciplining students with disabilities (Yell).

The passage of IDEA 97 significantly expanded school leaders' roles in serving all children in their buildings. Yet despite the increased special education responsibilities, school leaders receive minimal preparation on special education issues in administrator preparation programs (Witt, 2003).

The signing of the amendments in IDEA 97 appeared to resolve major disagreements regarding dealing with behaviors of students with disabilities and the means by which discipline provisions would be carried out (Smith, 2000). Nevertheless, the discipline provisions have proven to be a very controversial aspect of the law. In addition to the discipline requirements, Congress included provisions regarding the use of positive and preventive programming for students with disabilities who exhibit problem behavior in schools (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

The current discipline provisions of IDEA 97 now apply to students with disabilities, as well as those students suspected of having a disability who are subject to disciplinary action. IDEA 97 attempts to provide school personnel, parents, and others with greater specificity as to how the disciplinary rules and the obligation to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) fit together. This includes (a) proactive requirements of the law designed to ensure that students with disabilities adhere to school rules, (b) provisions regarding removal of students from their current placements when behaviors significantly violate school discipline codes, and (c) requirements for the continuation of services for students with disabilities who are disciplined (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000).

Furthermore, IDEA 97 mandates several provisions of due process that are not afforded to students without disabilities. Specifically, at the root of the perceived duality is the provision that, as opposed to students without disabilities, students with disabilities may not receive a change of placement based solely on the discipline infraction (Evans, 1999; Smith, 1997; Yell, 1998).

That the treatment of students with disabilities who are violent or disruptive has caused an intense controversy that continues to surround the disciplinary provisions of special education law. “The crux of the controversy represents a fundamental clash between two basic values enacted into law and supported by the courts” (Skiba, 2002, p. 82). Skiba emphasizes that at the heart of the controversy is the entitlement of students with special needs to due process and FAPE versus the right of schools administrators to implement procedures they see as necessary to protect the safety of students and teachers. Much of the debate on separate standards for discipline of students with disabilities stems from restrictions on schools wishing to use strategies such as suspension and expulsion with students who are afforded protections under IDEA (Smith, 1997).

The perception that a dual system of discipline exists began in 1989 and can be traced back to the landmark case of *Honig v. Doe* (Smith, 1997). In this case the “stay-put” provision of the act (EAHCA) directed that a child with disabilities shall remain in his or her then current educational placement pending completion of any review proceedings, unless the parents and state or school agree to a placement. Respondents Doe and Smith, who were students with emotional disabilities, were suspended indefinitely for violent and disruptive conduct. Their parents filed suit stipulating that the students’ behavior was a result of their disability and, therefore, the suspensions violated the students’ rights under EAHCA. The

Federal District Court entered summary judgment for the respondents on their claims and issued a permanent injunction. The Court of Appeals affirmed the ruling (*Honig v. Doe*, 484 U.S. 305) (1989).

Since the passage of the IDEA 97, several attempts at weakening the discipline provisions have occurred. The Reauthorization of IDEA 97 on December 3, 2004 is now called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), and contains three primary changes in the discipline provisions. These include a) the addition of a discipline provision for serious bodily injury, b) the placement during appeals, and c) the language used during manifestation determination reviews (Ahearn, 2005).

The first change related to the addition of the term *serious bodily injury* means that a student with a disability may be placed in an interim alternative education setting (IAES) for at least 45 days at the authority of the school personnel if the student's behavior meets the definition of serious bodily injury, regardless of whether the behavior is determined to be a manifestation of the child's disability. Prior to the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA 97, if a student's behavior caused serious bodily injury and it was determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability, the school district was unable to remove a student to an interim alternative education setting unless the parent agreed to the alternative placement or at the ruling of a hearing officer.

The second significant change in the discipline provisions concerns placement during appeals. Under IDEA 2004, IAES is considered to be the stay-put placement until either a decision by a hearing officer or agreement between the schools and the parents is made.

The third significant change to the discipline provisions concerns the language used to determine if a behavior is a manifestation of a student's disability. According to IDEA 2004, there must be a substantial relationship between the disability and the behavior. While the changes in the discipline provisions of IDEA 2004 are few, they clearly illustrate a deliberate responsiveness to heightened awareness and accountability for school safety held by the public and private sectors.

School leaders' charge to provide safe and orderly schools is of the utmost importance. Yell and Rozalski (2000) address safety as one of the most critical charges of a school leader in the 21st century. "Violence in American society has reached epidemic proportions. Especially troubling is the increasing violence among young people, with the predictable spillover of effects into the public schools" (p. 1).

Similarly, in the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward the Public Schools, started in 1969, lack of discipline has been identified as the number one problem in 16 out of the first 20 polls (Evans, 1999; Evans, Chappell, Bullock, & Gable, 2002). The 30th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of the Public's Attitude Toward Public Schools (1998) ranked lack of discipline as the number two area of concern behind fighting and gang violence as the number one concern. Additionally, the public's perceptions of school safety have fallen steadily since the early 1980s (Rose & Gallup, 2003). Moreover, almost 65% of the respondents reported that those students with learning problems should be educated in a special school (Rose & Gallup, 1998), demonstrating that the public believes that students with learning problems also cause discipline problems. In the 35th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Public Schools (2003), lack of discipline maintained the number two position of area of concern for public schools (Rose

& Gallup, 2003). The 37th Annual Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Public Schools (2005) results in lack of discipline dropping slightly to the number three area of concern (Rose & Gallup, 2005).

The national concern over the problem of school safety has led to federal, state, and local efforts to address this issue by creating new laws and policies. These laws and policies include adopting zero-tolerance approaches, conducting targeted and random searches of students and their property, using metal detectors, and preventing violence through education (Yell & Rozalski, 2000). Paramount to the 21st century school leaders is the challenge of balancing the compliance requirements of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 with other school safety federal and state laws.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine a) the perceptions of school leaders concerning the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on maintaining a safe school environment, b) the extent to which school leaders are aware of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, and c) the areas of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 that are regarded by school leaders as being of the highest priority for staff development considerations to support safe learning environments for students.

Findings from this research can provide insight into school leaders' perceptions on the challenges of disciplining students with disabilities and their nondisabled peers. Comparisons among school leaders at the elementary, middle, and high schools were of particular interest. Additionally, case law and legal foundations of the discipline provisions were researched to discover trends in making recommendations for building level administrators' professional development.

Overarching Research Questions

IDEA 97 was reauthorized on December 3, 2004, and renamed IDEA 2004. With this reauthorization will come new provisions for providing services to students with disabilities; however, educators must work within the framework of the existing provisions until new guidelines are issued. The overarching questions answered in this research study were a) To what extent are school leaders aware of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, which have been in place since 2001? and b) How do school leaders view the impact of those provisions on their ability to maintain a safe learning environment for all?

Specific Research Questions

1. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest impact on school safety?
2. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?
3. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of staff development needs concerning the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

Significance of Study

The data collected and analyzed for this study revealed the extent of school leaders' knowledge of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions and their perceptions of the impact of those provisions on their ability to provide a safe learning environment, as well as school leaders' perceptions regarding professional development needs to effectively manage the discipline

provisions. Additionally, this investigation yielded recommendations for school leader preparation and professional development.

Thus the study provides school leaders with relevant information to assist in legally complying with the discipline provisions in IDEA 97 by identifying discrepancies in the school leaders' knowledge base of IDEA 97 and by identifying areas that school leaders perceive as most significantly impacting their ability to provide a safe learning environment so as to determine recommendations to institutions of higher learning for school leader preparation. Furthermore, the findings provide data for the State Board of Education as it considers licensure requirements for school leaders.

Definitions

Behavior intervention plan (BIP). A BIP is a plan that will specify the strategies, modifications, or supports that address the behavior in question (Evans, 1999).

Change of placement. A change of placement is for purposes of removal of a child with a disability from the child's current educational placement under IDEA 97. A change of placement occurs if

- (a) The removal is for more than 10 consecutive school days; or
- (b) The student is subjected to a series of removals that constitute a pattern because they cumulate to more than 10 school days in a school year, and because of factors such as the length of each removal, the total amount of time the student is removed, and the proximity of the removals to one another (20 U.S.C. 1415(j)).

Comprehensive elementary school. Comprehensive elementary schools are schools that serve populations of student in grade pre-kindergarten and/or kindergarten through grade 5.

Comprehensive high school. Comprehensive high schools are schools that serve populations of students in grade 9 through grade 12.

Comprehensive middle school. Comprehensive middle schools are middle schools that serve populations of students in grade 6 through grade 8.

Dangerous weapon. A dangerous weapon is a weapon, device, instrument, material, or substance, animate, or inanimate, that is used for, or is readily capable of, causing death or serious bodily injury, except that such term doesn't not include a pocket knife with a blade of less than 2 ½ inches in length (18 U.S.C. 930 (2)(g)).

Expulsion. An expulsion is a revocation of privileges of school membership for 180 days or more (Evans, 1999).

Free appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE is defined as Special education and related services that meet state standards, provided at public expense and in conformity with a student's individualized education program (20 U.S.C. 1221e-3).

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA). An FBA is a process for examining the relationship between a student's behavior and the environment. The objective is to understand the structure and function of the inappropriate behavior (Evans, 1999).

Individualized education program (IEP). An IEP is a written statement for a student with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised in a meeting (20 U.S.C. 1401(11)).

Individualized education program team. An individualized education program team is a group of knowledgeable and qualified individuals that is responsible for developing, reviewing, or revising, an IEP for a student with a disability (20 U.S.C. 1221e-3). By law, the membership of the IEP team at minimum must include: (a) the parent(s), (b) at least one general education teacher of the student, (c) at least one special education teacher of the

student, and d) a representative of the local education agency who is qualified to provide or supervise special education, knowledgeable about the general curriculum, and is knowledgeable about the resources of the local education agency (Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 2004c).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is the federal law that provides financial assistance to states for programs for the education of students with disabilities. States must comply with the rules and regulations of the Act to receive financial assistance (Bias, 2002).

Long-term suspension. Suspension greater than 10 consecutive school days constitute a change in placement (Evans, 1999).

Manifestation determination. The review of the relationship between a student's disability and the behavior subject to the disciplinary action is known as a manifestation determination (20 U.S.C. 1415(k)(4)).

Procedural safeguards. An extensive system of procedures to ensure that parents are equal participants in the child's special education process are known as procedural safeguards (VDOE, 2004c).

School leader. A school leader is defined for this study as an administrator who has primary responsibility for the supervision of special education services in a single school (i.e., principal, assistant principal, or intern).

Short-term suspension. Suspension for 10 days or less are considered as short-term (Evans, 1999).

Special education. Special education is defined as specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability (20 U.S.C. 1401(25)).

Stay-put placement. The stay-put placement is considered the then-current educational placement where a student remains during due process hearings (20 U.S.C. 1415(e)(3)).

Student with a disability. A student with a disability is defined as a student evaluated and determined eligible for special education and related services for mental retardation, a hearing impairment, including deafness, a speech impairment, a visual impairment, including blindness, emotional disturbance, an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, and other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities (20 U.S.C. 1401(3)(A) and (B); 1401(26)).

Delimitations

A delimitation is any factor within the researcher's control that may affect external validity. External validity is the extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to individuals and settings beyond those that were studied (Gall et al., 1996). "Delimitations imply limitations on the research design that the researcher has imposed intentionally" (Rudestam & Newton, 2001, p. 90).

This research is delimited by the geographical range of the sample studied. Only school leaders who supervise special education in Virginia schools were surveyed. Therefore, generalizability of the study will be confined to school leaders in Virginia public school districts who supervise special education.

Limitations

The limitations of a study are those characteristics of design or methodology that set parameters on the application or interpretation of the results of the study; that is, the constraints on generalizability and use of findings that are the result of the design or method that establish internal and external validity (Gall et al., 1996). “These limitations refer to restrictions in the study over which the researcher has no control” (Rudestam & Newton, 2001, p. 90).

Specific limitations of the study design is most pronounced in terms of the number of responses to the survey and the number of school districts in the population sample that refused to participate in the study. While the specified number of responses in each population strata was met, limited return rates in several school districts limit the generalizability of the findings.

Summary

In summary, this study examined the perceptions of randomly selected school leaders who supervise special education in Virginia concerning (a) their knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, (b) the impact of those provisions on maintaining safe learning environments, and (c) the professional development needs to effectively manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. The following chapters provide an extensive review of the extant literature, the methods and procedures used for collecting and analyzing the data, the results of the data collection and analyses, as well as the conclusions, discussion, and recommendations drawn from the data analyses.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Maintaining discipline and safety in America's public schools is a key concern of school officials, parents, and policymakers nationwide. The public expects schools to operate in an orderly environment free from violence and harm to students (Shaul, 2001). While these expectations are not surprising, they take on special significance when considering the fact that violence in and around schools has become more common and more serious in recent years (Furlong & Morrison, 2000; Kachur, Stennies, Powell, & Modzeleski, 1996; Kaufman, Chen, Choy, Chapman, Rand, & Ringel, 2001).

In the two-year period from 1992 to 1994, 105 students and 12 teachers died violently at school or school-related activities. Eighty percent of those deaths were homicides, and guns were used in 77% of the cases. The remaining 20% of the deaths were reported as suicides (Kachur et al., 1996; U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DOE], 1996).

During 1996-97, about 4,000 incidents of rape or other types of sexual battery were reported in our nation's public schools. In addition, there were approximately 11,000 incidents of physical attacks or fights in which weapons were used and 7,000 robberies in schools that year. Over 190,000 fights or physical attacks not involving weapons also occurred at schools in 1996-97, along with about 115,000 thefts and 98,000 incidents of vandalism (U.S. DOE, 1998).

Between July 1, 1999, and Jun 30, 2000, there were 32 school associated violent deaths (U.S. DOE, 2003b). In 2000, students ages 12 through 18 were victims of about 1.9 million crimes at school, including about 128,000 serious violent crimes (including rape, sexual assault, robbery and aggravated assault). That same year, about 29% of students in

grades 9 through 12 reported that someone had offered, sold or given them an illegal drug on school property (U.S. DOE, 2002a).

In the 2002-2003 school year, school-aged youths were the victims of 23 school associated violent deaths, 1.9 million nonfatal crimes at school, and 740,000 nonviolent crimes. Students ages 12-18 reported being victims of violent and non-violent crimes away from school at double the rate of victimization at schools (U.S. DOE, 2004).

School violence, often associated with impoverished inner-city schools, has now spread to suburban and rural schools (Sleek, 1998). While overall school crime rates have declined over the last few years, violence, gangs and drugs are still present, indicating that schools leaders must continue to give attention to this matter.

Overall, youth violence in the United States has increased at an alarming rate. For example, homicide has become the second leading cause of death for youths aged 15-24 and the leading cause of death for African-Americans in this age group (Skiba et al., 2000; U.S. DOE, 2000; 2002b). Schools are not insulated from these alarming statistics, and incidents of school violence have thrust school discipline to the forefront of public consciousness and call for reform (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Although the majority of students do not present significant discipline problems, even a small number of students who engage in negative behavior can disrupt the learning environment (Rivera & Smith, 1996; Shaul, 2001).

The Indicators of School Crime and Safety (2004) provides the most recent national indicators on school crime and safety. According to these indicators, measurable improvements have occurred in the safety of students between 1992 and 2002. Specifically, the violent crime victimization rate at school declined from 48 violent victimizations per 1,000 students in 1992 to 28 such victimizations in 2002. Even so, violence, theft, bullying,

drugs, and firearms are still prevalent: students ages 12-18 were victims of about 764,000 violent crimes and 1.2 million crimes of theft at school in 2001 (DeVoe, Kaufman, Ruddy, Miller, Planty, Snyder, & Rand, 2003).

According to the Virginia Department of Education annual report of discipline, crime, and violence (2004), a total of 344,184 incidents of discipline, crime and violence were reported for the 2002-2003 school year in Virginia schools alone. Although fatal violence is unlikely to occur in most schools (violent deaths in schools declined from 43 in 1992 to 14 in 2001) every new incident serves as a reminder that no school is immune from the threat of bloodshed (Hancock, 2001).

With these sobering statistics, school leaders must have a deep understanding of educational law, special education law, and the provisions that guide the practice of the 21st century school leader (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Sage & Burrello, 1994; Shaul, 2001; Smith & Colon, 1998; Yell, 1998). This is especially important considering the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 and its impact on school leaders' charge to ensure that all students have access to a rigorous education in a safe learning environment. This chapter provides historical, legislative and judicial implications for educational leadership practice and knowledge as support for the efficacy of the research.

Historical Implications of Special Education to School Leadership and School Safety

Many historians trace the modern special education movement to World War II. It was during this period that many soldiers with no congenital or childhood diseases or disabilities became severely and profoundly disabled. These newly disabled veterans, returning in large numbers, challenged the American medical community and ultimately lead to breakthroughs in understanding and treatment aided by technological advancements

(Daugherty, 1999). Moreover, advocacy groups for underrepresented populations, and especially the civil rights movement, during the 1950s and 1960s, sought changes to provide equal opportunities for minorities. The movement led to changes in legislation that provided constitutional protections for minorities, which later led to the reform movement to include students with disabilities (Yell, Rogers, & Rogers, 1998).

Historically, many students with disabilities were excluded from public schools, leaving parents to be predominantly responsible for their child's education (Bias, 2002). Prior to Public Law 94-142, the EAHCA, students with disabilities were removed in large numbers from general classrooms rather than being included in publicly supported education programs.

Some states, such as Illinois, even had laws that permitted public schools to deny admission to these children. In this case, *Department of Public Welfare v. Haas* (1958), the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the state's compulsory attendance law did not require the state to provide free public education for children who were "mentally deficient or feeble minded" and unable to benefit from education (Bias, 2002). Gradually, in the 1970s, public schools began educating children with disabilities, but usually in a separate class or facility (Osborne, 1998; Yell, 1998).

It has been a long and arduous battle for advocacy efforts to ensure that students with disabilities receive FAPE. The educational rights of children with disabilities were gained largely through the efforts of parents and advocacy groups in the courts and legislature of this country (Yell, 1998). Several important court cases led to legislation and regulations that provided the right to an education for students with disabilities.

Judicial Considerations

Many special education cases have gone to the U.S. Supreme Court and several have been heard in lower courts as well. The most important education case decided by the U.S. Supreme Court was the first school race-desegregation case, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) (*Brown*). This landmark case is particularly important to special education and the education of students with disabilities as outlined below.

In this case, the court reasoned that because of the importance of education in American society, the stigmatizing effects of racial segregation, and the negative consequences of racial segregation on the education of those against whom segregation was practiced, segregated public schools denied students equal access to educational opportunities. “This basic truth was considered by many to be equally applicable to those denied equal opportunity to an education because of a disability” (Yell, 1998, p. 56).

“Central to *Brown* was the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law found in the Fourteenth Amendment” (Yell, 1998, p. 55). *Brown* (1954) fundamentally changed the federal system. “The ‘separate but equal’ doctrine in *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896) was ruled to have to no place in public education” (Bias, 2002, p. 22), and *Brown* (1954) heralded the massive entry of the federal government into public education and set precedent for other civil rights legislation.

The concept of equal educational opportunities was applied to students with disabilities in the courts 18 years following the *Brown* (1954) decision (Bias, 2002). That is, in 1972, *PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1972) (*PARC*) and *Mills v. Board of Education* (1972) (*Mills*) became landmark cases that created the framework for the

procedural safeguards of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Yell, et al., 1998).

In the *PARC* (1972) case, the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children brought a class action suit against the Commonwealth in a federal district court. The plaintiffs argued that students with mental retardation were not receiving publicly supported education because the state was delaying or ignoring its constitutional obligation to provide a publicly supported education for these students, therefore violating the students' rights under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution (Yell, 1998).

PARC (1972) was resolved by consent agreement that all children with mental retardation between the ages of 6 and 21 must receive a free public education. It was further agreed that it was most desirable to educate children with mental retardation in a program most like the programs provided for their peers without disabilities (Yell, 1998).

Soon after the *PARC* (1972) decision, a class-action suit was filed in the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia. *Mills* (1972) was filed against the District of Columbia's Board of Education on behalf of all out-of-school students with disabilities. This case resulted in a ruling that all children with disabilities would receive a public education based on the Fourteenth Amendment. Moreover, the court ruled that students must have due process for evaluation, placement, and exclusion (Yell, 1998). Thus, *PARC* (1972) and *Mills* (1972) contributed significantly to the framework for P.L. 94-142, as did Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was designed to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs receiving federal financial assistance. The statute holds the following:

No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States...shall, solely by reason of his or her disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of , or be subjected to discrimination under any program or any activity receiving Federal financial assistance.(Section 504, 29 U.S.C § 794 (a))

In a more recent case, *The Board of Education of the Hudson Central School District v. Rowley* (1985) (*Rowley*) set the standard for FAPE. In this landmark case, the school district prevailed even though a student with hearing impairments was refused an interpreter. The Court ruled that the student was making progress and benefiting from the curriculum without the aid of an interpreter and, therefore, the student had received FAPE. The Court further ruled that FAPE is provided when the IEP offers individualized instruction and support services to give educational benefit to the child with a disability (Yell, 1998). However, as new legislation is created, especially with regard to the average yearly progress provision of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*, the provision of FAPE will be further challenged in the courts (Mehfoud, 2004; Thurlow, 2002).

Several rulings from state and federal courts became the underpinnings for the discipline provisions of IDEA. In *Goss v. Lopez* (1975), the Supreme Court, by a 5-4 decision, ruled that it was unconstitutional to deprive a student of his/her educational rights without providing due process to the student. All students, with and without disabilities, have rights in disciplinary matters based on the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution (Yell, 1998).

In this case, nine public high school students in Columbus, Ohio were suspended from school for up to 10 days without a hearing. The Ohio code included a section that gave the principal of a public school the power to suspend a student for misconduct for up to 10

days or to expel him/her. The student's parents needed to be notified, but only students who were expelled had the right to appeal to the Board of Education. The students in this case challenged the entire section of the Ohio law, clarifying that it was unconstitutional because it violated their Fourteenth Amendment right to due process of law.

One of the students who brought suit was Dwight Lopez. Lopez was suspended from Central High School for being an innocent bystander at a lunchroom disturbance that resulted in damage to school property. Lopez testified that at least 75 other children were involved and suspended as well but that he was not engaging in the destructive behavior. The remaining nine students in the case had similar experiences, resulting in suspensions even though they were not involved (Sidow, 2003).

On January 22, 1975, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of the students, thereby invalidating the Ohio statute that allowed students to be suspended for up to 10 days without a hearing. For the first time, the Court ruled that it is not educational officials and state legislatures who have the right to determine the rules of discipline within the classroom, but the federal courts. A new procedural safeguard emerged out of this case: A student may not be suspended for 10 days or less without notice and being provided due process either before or promptly after the suspension (Sidow, 2003; Yell, 1998.).

The Court's decision was primarily based on the fact that students have an interest in education, and that interest is protected by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. However, the decision was not unanimous. The three dissenting judges, Powell, Blackmun, and Rehnquist, believed that a suspension of less than 10 days without a hearing was not an infringement on a student's primary interest in education (Sidow, 2003). This opinion was incorporated into the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. A student with

disabilities may be suspended from school for up to 10 days without receiving special education service as long as the due process provision of *Goss v. Lopez* (1975) is ensured.

S-I v. Turlington (1981) is the case law that is the framework of the manifestation determination provision of IDEA 97. In this case, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that a student with a disability could not be suspended if the behavior was a manifestation of the student's disability and that the determination must be conducted by a specialized and knowledgeable group of people (Bartlett, 1989; Yell, 1998). The Court further held that a complete cessation of services for a student with disabilities was prohibited even if the suspension or expulsion was deemed appropriate by the reviewing committee (Bias, 2002).

Honig v. Doe (1988) (*Honig*) is considered the seminal case on the "stay-put" provision of IDEA (Yell, 1998). It involved the proposed expulsion of two students with emotional disabilities from a San Francisco public school system. Both students had been suspended from school and recommended for expulsion. In accordance with state law, the suspensions were continued indefinitely while the expulsion proceedings were being held (Yell, 1998). The district court ordered an injunction that prevented the school district from suspending any student with disabilities for misbehavior related to the student's disabilities. The school district appealed. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in *Doe v. Mahler* (1986), held that expulsion is a change in placement, triggering the procedural safeguards (Yell). However, the Court further ruled that if a student met the criteria of "dangerous," the school district could suspend the student up to 10 days, allowing the schools to appeal to the courts to grant relief. This is called a *Honig* injunction (Bias, 2002).

Honig (1989) was critically important in the framework of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 for several reasons: (a) suspensions over 10 days are not allowed without a

manifestation determination review; (b) long-term suspension, or expulsion for disability-related misbehavior is not allowed; (c) educational services must continue in the event of proper long-term suspension or expulsion; and (d) disciplinary decisions must be made by the IEP team and must not be made unilaterally (Yell, 1998).

In *Horry County School District v. P.F.* (1998), the court granted injunctive relief for a student who was found to be substantially likely to cause injury to self or others. Because of the student's dangerous behavior and likelihood of causing injury to self and others, the school district was granted an interim alternative 45-day placement for the student in a residential setting after the parents filed due process. The court held that the four elements applied to the removal of a "dangerous student" from his/her current educational placement: (a) the student was substantially likely to harm himself/herself or others, (b) the student's current placement was considered appropriate, (c) reasonable efforts were made by the school district to reduce the risk of harm, and (d) the proposed interim placement would allow the implementation of the student's IEP and was designed to prevent future violent behavior (Bias, 2002).

More recent circuit court cases have also underscored the importance of students with problem behavior receiving educational benefit. Specifically, in *Rome School Committee v. Mrs. B.* (2001), the court held that a student's IEP must address the student's behavior when it interferes with the ability to learn and to obtain educational benefit (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Frye, 2002). In another recent case, *Gonzales v. Puerto Rico Department of Education* (2001), the consideration of the behavior at school was also extended to behavior at home. That is, "the court concluded that when a student requires highly structured activities both during and after school to receive benefit from an

appropriate education, ‘clear lines’ can rarely be drawn between the student's educational needs and his social problems at home” (Katsiyannis et al., p. 53).

The discipline provisions of IDEA 97 now apply to all students with disabilities and, in some cases, to students who are suspected of having a disability though not yet identified (Bias, 2002; Evans, 1999; Yell, 1998). In summary, case law considerations have largely formed the framework for the legislative and regulatory guidelines that shape the practice of school leaders regarding the education of students with disabilities. It is vitally important that school leaders understand and adhere to the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 to ensure that students receive a free and appropriate public education and to avoid costly litigation.

Legislation and Regulations

Early in the history of our country, states began to pass compulsory attendance laws. Rhode Island was the first in 1840, followed by Massachusetts in 1852. By 1918, all states had passed compulsory attendance laws (Yell, 1998). However, despite the belief that America’s children deserved an education, many students with disabilities were being excluded from public education and, at best, only a few were being served in separate facilities which were staffed with poorly trained teachers (Osborne, 1998; Yell et al, 1998).

The courts ruled on several cases concerning the conflict between exclusionary practices and compulsory education in the early to mid part of the 20th century. For example, in *Board of Education v. Goldman* (1934), an Ohio School board adopted an exclusionary practice for any child with an IQ less than 50 who was “incapable of profiting substantially from further instruction.” Also, the Eighth

District Court of Appeals upheld the decision that the DOE had the authority to exclude students who were judged as not able to benefit from school (Bias, 2002).

Many assume that a federal statute, P.L. 94-142 (1975), created educational rights for children with disabilities; in fact, some of these rights were first established in state statutes and grew out of federal court cases based on the U.S. Constitution (Martin, Reed, & Terman, 1996). The first significant federal involvement in the education of students with disabilities came with passage of the Expansion of Teaching the Education of Mentally Retarded Children Act of 1958, which provided funds for training teachers for students with mental retardation (Yell, 1998). Later, “the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the first major federal effort to *subsidize direct services* to selected populations in public elementary and secondary schools” (Martin et al., p. 26).

PARC (1972) and *Mills* (1972) contributed significantly to the framework for P.L. 94-142, as did Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the first federal civil rights law to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, was intended to prohibit discrimination against a person with a disability by an agency receiving federal funds (Yell, 1998). Essentially, Section 504 “ensures that no otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States...shall solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any activity receiving federal financial assistance” (Section 504, 29 U.S.C).

The ESEA (1965) was amended in the form of the Education of Handicapped Amendment of 1974 (EHA), P.L.93-180, to provide funding for a variety of programs for students who were disadvantaged and for students with disabilities (Yell, et al., 1998).

Specifically, the purpose of the 1974 Amendment was to require each state receiving federal funding to establish a goal for providing full educational opportunities to all students with disabilities. Thus these amendments acknowledged the rights of students with disabilities to an education and provided funds (Title VI-B) for education programs. Additionally, Title VI-B funding guidelines specified due process procedures and addressed the issue of least restrictive environment (Yell et al.).

In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the most significant increase in the role of the federal government in special education. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA), P.L.94-142, combined an educational bill of rights with the promise of federal financial incentives for implantation and compliance (Yell et al., 1998). The act contained administrative and funding provisions providing that states develop policies assuring all qualified students with disabilities receive special education and related services.

The EAHCA required participating states to provide FAPE for qualified students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 18 by September 1, 1978, and for all students up to age 21 by September 1, 1980. P.L.94-142 further mandated that qualified students with disabilities had the right to (a) nondiscriminatory testing, evaluation, and placement procedure; (b) education in the least restrictive environment; (c) procedural due process, including parental involvement; and (d) a free and appropriate public education (Yell, 1998). While the EAHCA provided federal funding to states to provide an appropriate education to all qualified students with disabilities, for the school districts to receive the money, each school district had to submit written plans that outlined appropriate programs for students with disabilities (Yell).

The EAHCA, P.L. 101-476, was reauthorized in 1990. The name was changed to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and several provisions were added: (a) the language of the law was changed to add person-first language and to replace “handicap children” with the term “children, student or individual with disabilities,” (b) students with autism and traumatic brain injury were identified as separate disability categories; (c) transition planning for students with disabilities at age 16 was mandated by the reauthorization (Yell, 1998).

P.L.-105-17, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA 97) was passed to reauthorize and make significant improvements to the IDEA. Sweeping changes restructured the IDEA by consolidating the law from eight parts to four, and made significant additions in several ways. “Rather than establishing substantive educational standards to ensure that the goal of the IDEA was fulfilled, Congress created an elaborate set of procedural safeguards” (Yell, 1998, p. 72).

IDEA 97 also contained several additional provisions to the law: (a) language to strengthen roles for parents, ensuring access to the general education curriculum, and emphasizing student progress toward meaningful education outcomes through changes in the IEP process; (b) language encouraging parents and educators to resolve differences by using non-adversarial mediation and allowing school officials greater leeway in disciplining students with disabilities by altering aspects of the IDEA 97’s procedural safeguards; and (c) funding formulas to give greater flexibility (Yell, 1998). While IDEA 97 has made great strides in giving access to education to students with disabilities, it has been impeded by low expectations, ineffective attention to translating research into practice, and too great an

emphasis on paperwork and legal requirements at the expense of teaching and learning (Osborne, 2001; Yell).

While not specifically a special education law, P.L. 101-336, The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), has been heralded by many as both the most significant civil rights legislation since the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and as the most comprehensive legislation for individuals with disabilities. The purpose of ADA was to provide comprehensive protection to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals with regard to race, sex, national origin, age, and religion. This law often impacts the provision of services for students with disabilities (Yell, 1998).

By the end of the 1900s, although all of the states had compulsory education laws, the exclusion of students with disabilities was still widespread. The civil rights movement, and specifically the case of *Brown v. Board* (1954) decision, provided impetus for subsequent legislation and litigation granting students with disabilities the right to FAPE. The seminal cases in securing the right to FAPE were *PARC* (1972) and *Mills* (1972). Several court cases concerning the discipline of students with disabilities were also heard. The major pieces of federal legislation to emerge in the 1970s were Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Yell, 1998).

Federal regulations concerning academic outcomes. While the thrust of this dissertation research is to examine school leaders' knowledge levels of IDEA 97 discipline provisions and their perceptions regarding the impact of the discipline provisions on school safety and professional development, Hoy and Hoy (2003) remind us that school is about teaching and learning and that all other activities are in support of those endeavors.

Therefore, it is important to consider the federal regulations that provide the context in which school leaders must operate, one which offers assurances that students are provided access to a rigorous curriculum and adequate academic outcomes in a safe and orderly learning environment.

Two key provisions in IDEA 97 require states to explicitly consider the needs of these students as new reforms are implemented to help ensure that students with disabilities are not left behind (Giacobbe, Livers, Thayer-Smith, & Walther-Thomas, 2001). First, states must ensure that students with disabilities have ongoing access to the same general education curriculum as their nondisabled peers. This provision makes it more difficult for schools to assume that students with disabilities will not be successful in general education environments and assign them prematurely to separate pull-out programs (Giacobbe et al.). Therefore, IDEA 97 also affects the roles and responsibilities of specialists (e.g., special educators, speech therapists, reading specialists) who provide special education and related services to students with disabilities in public schools (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, & Williams, 2000).

Second, the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 delineated that the IEP provisions of these amendments specify that under “special considerations,” if a student’s behavior is interfering with his or her learning or the learning of others, the IEP team will consider the use of positive behavioral supports (PBS) needed to address such behavior (Turnbull, Wilcox, Stowe, & Turnbull, 2001). The Constitution of the United States is a powerful justification for the use of positive behavioral strategies (PBS) in our schools when working with students with disabilities (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000). That is, according to Turnbull and Turnbull, the Fifth Amendment prohibits the government from denying any person life,

liberty or property without due process of law. Further, the Fourteenth Amendment prohibits a state from denying any person life, liberty, or property, and requires a state to provide “equal protection” of law to anyone in its jurisdiction. These two doctrines undergird IDEA 97’s PBS provisions (Turnbull & Turnbull).

In March of 1994, The Goals 2000: Educate America Act, Public Law 103-227, became law. Title I of the act defined a set of eight national education goals, and the rest of the law was intended to provide a framework for meeting the goals. The eight goals that were to be reached by the year 2000 are as follows: (a) all children will start school ready to learn; (b) high school graduation will increase to at least 90%; (c) all students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter; (d) national teaching forces will improve; (e) U.S. students will be the first in the world in mathematics and science achievement; (f) every adult will be literate; (g) every school will be free of drugs and violence; and (h) every school will promote partnerships with parents (National Education Goals Panel, 1998).

Prior to *A Nation at Risk* (1983), a report published by U.S. Department of Education's National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE) that is often cited as the origin of current reform efforts, several educational initiatives were being promulgated in different quarters; however, only those concerning students with disabilities used language that spoke to objective outcomes and accountability. Since *A Nation at Risk* (1983) was published, several laws have been passed increasing emphasis on accountability, empirical data, teacher training, school reform, and out-come based assessment practices culminating in the most significant education reform to date (NCEE, 1983). On January 23, 2001, President George W. Bush sent the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) plan for

comprehensive education reform to Congress, asking members of Congress to engage in an active bipartisan debate on how the federal role in education could close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers.

NCLB goes far beyond any previous federal education mandate. Not only does it prescribe education standards for all education personnel working in Title I programs and schools, the law applies the same high standards to almost all educators, schools, and students (Egnor, 2003). As a result, the NCLB, embodies the four principles for education reform: stronger accountability for results, expanded flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods that have been proven to work. This is the most sweeping reform of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) since it was enacted in 1965, as it redefines the federal role in K-12 education to help improve the academic achievement of all American students (U.S. DOE 2002b).

Though not specifically a special education law, the enactment of NCLB has implications for school leaders in terms of special education policy and practice, mainly in the areas of school accountability and personnel certification and licensure issues (Egnor, 2003). One of the most significant implications of NCLB for school leaders in terms of special education policy and practice is Average Yearly Progress (AYP), the assurance that all students will make progress toward benchmarks for proficiency in math and reading, as well as science and the set of graduated accountability measures that flow from NCLB when students fail to meet AYP.

Related to AYP and student proficiency levels is the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. Such assessments must be based on challenging state standards in reading and mathematics with annual statewide progress objectives ensuring

that all groups of students reach proficiency by the 2013-2014 school year. Thus, NCLB creates an imperative for school leaders to increase their involvement in special education process to ensure that students with disabilities receive the services they need to help them make AYP (Egnor, 2003). Moreover, it is crucial that performance criteria and assessment tools sufficiently allow for individualized accommodations for children with disabilities while ensuring continued reliability and validity of results (Ahearn, 2005; Mehfoud, 2004; U.S. DOE, 2002b; Yell et al., 1998).

School leaders must be cognizant of the extent to which state curriculum content standards and assessment tools are sufficiently inclusive to allow and account for individualized accommodations determined by each child's IEP team without watering down the standards or jeopardizing the credibility of the results (Egnor, 2003; Thurlow, 2002). There can be no dual standards for academic achievement under NCLB; however, under IDEA 97, many concerns arise concerning the perception of duality regarding its discipline provisions.

Student behavior that is considered inappropriate under school rules can and often does signal due process under the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. As a result, there is a significant perception of duality held among many school leaders who are charged with maintaining orderly schools (Evans, 1999; Sage & Burello, 1994). Substantial concerns about the duality center around federal legislation and zero-tolerance policies that are also mandated to school leaders in an effort to provide safe schools (Evans, 1999; Martin, 2003; Martin et al., 1996; McAndrews, 2001; Skiba & Peterson, 2000; Yell, 1998).

IDEA 97 provisions related to discipline of students with disabilities.

“Historically, disciplinary guidelines for individuals with disabilities have been the result of judicial rulings and U.S. Department of Education policy statements” (Williams & Katsiyannis, 1998, p. 16). For the first time IDEA 97 amendments articulate as law much of what has been practiced (e.g., for exclusion up to 10 days, there is no differentiation between students with disabilities and same age peers; the need for determining relatedness of the misconduct and disability and resulting course of action depending on the existence [or lack thereof] of such relationship; and no cessation of services for IDEA-eligible students) (Williams & Katsiyannis).

IDEA 97 is a comprehensive law that not only provides supportive funding to the states but also governs how students with disabilities will be educated. According to the law, eligible students with disabilities must be provided with a FAPE, which consists of special education (i.e., instruction especially designed to meet the unique needs of a student) and related services (Katsiyannis, Yell, & Bradley, 2001).

Further, under IDEA 97 procedural safeguards apply to students with disabilities who are subject to disciplinary action. Specifically, IDEA 97 attempts to provide school personnel, parents, and others with greater specificity on how the school disciplinary rules and the obligation to provide FAPE fit together. This includes (a) proactive requirements designed to ensure that students with disabilities adhere to school policy, (b) rules regarding removal of students from their current placement when behavior significantly violates school rules and (c) requirements for the continuation of services for students with disabilities who are disciplined (Hartwig & Ruesch, 2000). However, many school leaders report much confusion over the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 and, as mentioned, a

perception of duality—one set of rules for students with disabilities and another for students without disabilities (Evans, 1999).

To address the concerns of school officials concerning the “perception of duality” (Evans, 1999; Yell, 1998), Congress added a section to the IDEA 97 in an attempt to balance the responsibilities of providing FAPE to students with disabilities and responsibilities to provide a safe and orderly environment for all students. The most significant changes to the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 addressed the areas of suspensions, manifestation determination reviews, interim placements and positive behavioral strategies to be incorporated into the IEP for students with disabilities. This is significant because much litigation concerning the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 has centered on those areas in relation to the denial of FAPE for students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998).

Federal regulations concerning school safety. Congress has passed legislation in response to the rising tide of school violence. In 1986, the original Drug Free Schools and Communities Act was passed and funded for the first time in fiscal year 1987. In 1994, that Act was modified to become the Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities Act, passed as part of the Improving America’s Schools Act. Two other important legislative mandates were passed in 1994: The Educate America Act (Goals 2000) contained Part B of Title X, Gun-Free Schools Act (GFSA) (1994), and the National Education Goal #7 became Safe, Disciplined, and Alcohol-and Drug-free Schools. Clearly, Congress has been paying closer attention to criminal and violent behavior in schools. Yet, because legislation is relatively new, there has been little agreement on how to define and quantify disruptive behaviors in schools (DeVoe et al., 2003).

The enactment of the GFSA added another level of complexity to the discipline of all students, but especially those students with disabilities. That is, in this Act, Congress required schools receiving federal funds to develop policies for the immediate removal of students for one school year for possession of a firearm on school campus. With the enactment of GFSA, schools adopted zero-tolerance policy for firearms (Skiba & Peterson, 1999). The GFSA (P.L103-882) (1994) requires schools to expel, for a period of not less than one year, students who have brought a weapon to school. However, this Act also specifies that schools are allowed to provide educational services in alternative settings. Threat to safety logically should only apply to students who have already caused serious injury or damage to school property or are at high risk of causing such injuries (e. g., possession of a gun or explosives) (Taras, Frankowski, McGrath, & Spears, 2003).

Several court cases and federal legislation have continued to contribute to the perspective of dual laws for students in America's schools. In recent decades, for example, Congress and state legislatures along with the federal and state courts have actively addressed the issues of school crime, violence, and disorder. A large body of law currently affects this area (Yell et al., 1998).

Congress has made school-related drug trafficking a federal crime. It has imposed requirements for states to impose penalties for weapons possession in schools. The Supreme Court has strengthened the search authority of school officials and improved the ability of educators to enforce rules restricting student expression that interferes with safe, orderly schools. However, the Supreme Court has clearly stated that students carry their civil rights with them into school, even if those rights are less extensive than comparable rights held by adults (Yell, 1998).

Although it is important for educators to understand their obligations and limitations in terms of maintaining safe schools, it is equally important that they understand and respect the rights of students in the process. Educators concerned with school order and safety should also be aware of the following statutes and court decisions found in Table 1 (U.S. DOE, 2003b).

Paramount to successfully maintaining a safe school and providing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education, school leaders must have a deep understanding of school and special education law (Katsiyannis & Herbst, 2004; Yell et al., 1998), as well as curriculum expertise and cultural responsiveness (Katsiyannis & Williams, 1998; Korinek & Popp, 1997; President's Council for Excellence in Special Education (PCESE), 2002).

Table 1

Selected Statutes and Court Decisions Descriptions

Statute/Court Decision	Description
<i>Comprehensive Crime Control Act</i> (1984)	Federal crime to drug traffic within 1000 feet of a school
<i>Veronia School District 47J v. Acton</i> (1995)	Random drug testing is Constitutional.
<i>Bethel v. Fraser</i> (1986)	Offensive speech may be limited
<i>New Jersey v. T.L.O</i> (1985)	School searches need to be "reasonable."
<i>Doe v. Renfrow</i> (1979)	Smell sensitive dogs not sufficient cause for strip search
<i>Goss v. Lopez</i> (1975)	Students afforded due process
<i>Tinker v. Des Moines</i> (1969)	Students afforded free speech

Impact of Exclusionary Practices

“Antisocial behavior among youth is a major national concern, and about one out of every three students with suspensions drop out of school” (National Dropout Prevention Center, as cited in Mayer, 2001, p. 333). Additionally, students who drop out of school are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested than graduates and, in fact, 82% of prisoners were reported to be high school dropouts” (U.S. DOE, 1996). School suspension has been consistently found to be a moderate to strong predictor of school dropout. In the High School and Beyond study, over 30% of sophomores who dropped out of school had been suspended, a rate three times that of peers who stayed in school (Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, as cited in Skiba, Peterson, & Williams, 1997).

In 1999-2000, the graduation rate for students with disabilities varied considerably by disability category. Graduation rates ranged from a low of 39.5% for students with mental retardation to a high of 73.4% for students with visual impairments. For students with emotional disabilities, graduation rates were only slightly higher than for students with mental retardation (U.S. DOE 2002a). According to the Twenty-Fifth Report to Congress (U.S. DOE, 2003a), in the 2000-2001 school year, 41.1 % of students ages 14 and older with disabilities dropped out of school.

According to a report from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (2002), dropout rates are higher among students with disabilities, and nearly one third of special education students cite discipline issues as the reason for dropping out. Ineffective approaches to discipline problems increase the probability of dropping out more than any other single factor. Furthermore, students with disabilities have significant difficulty readjusting to their school programs following suspension or expulsion, further

increasing the probability of dropping out. Each year's class of dropouts drains the nation of more than \$200 billion in lost earnings and taxes every year. Billions more are spent on welfare, health care and other social services due to the personal suffering associated with poverty and underemployment (Hale, 1998).

In a standards-based reform era, school safety, discipline and providing FAPE to students with disabilities cannot be taken lightly. Public focus on students with behavioral problems has increased in recent years for at least three reasons. First, disruptive behavior interferes with the educational process and places a burden on teachers. Concerns about the quality of education in the United States have focused greater attention to students who cannot or will not follow classroom rules. Second, today's youth are much more at risk for negative outcomes as a result of long-term exposure to poverty, social fragmentation, and violence in their communities (Walker, Zeller, & Close, 1999). For children with behavior problems, academic success is viewed as a pathway to a productive future (Korinek & Popp, 1997; Thurlow, 2002), while recovery from academic failure and school dropout can be extremely difficult. Third, students with behavioral and emotional disorders are often involved either as perpetrators or victims in acts of school violence (U.S. DOE, 2002b).

School Leaders' Knowledge of Special Education

Many school leaders report that the special education laws, policies, and procedures are complex and cumbersome (Patterson et al., 2000; Shaul, 2001). However, school leaders must have a deep understanding regarding their responsibilities concerning the education of students with disabilities.

General knowledge requirements. Special education presents one of the major challenges facing school leaders in this era demanding school reform. Today schools must

provide students with disabilities access to the general curriculum and appropriate instructional support while held accountable for the academic progress of all students. Student progress must be monitored closely and demonstrated through assessment efforts. The principal's role is pivotal in the special education process; however, few school leaders are well prepared for this responsibility (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Patterson et al., 2000).

Embedded in leadership preparation are the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. ISLLC was organized by the Council of Chief State School Officers for the purpose of developing model standards and assessments for school leaders.

ISLLC's primary constituency is the state education agencies responsible for school leader licensing. As such, the ISLLC standards guide leadership preparation used in institutions of higher learning in Virginia. While these standards are rigorous and comprehensive in scope, it is clear in the extant literature that school leaders often feel unprepared to assume the responsibilities of supervising special education (Crockett, 2002; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003).

It is worth noting that neither the ISLLC standards nor the curriculum guidelines for school administration set by the National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE) provide specific expectations for administering special education (Crockett, 2002). Additionally, the Virginia Code for K-12 administration and supervision training and licensure mandates no specific provisions mandated for competency in special education law (Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), 1998; Virginia General Assembly, 2004). However, in application, special education knowledge should be inherent in the competencies from ISSLC and the Virginia Department of Education as school leaders are

expected to demonstrate competency in diversity and knowledge of laws concerning school administration (ISLLC, 1996; VDOE, 1998).

American public schools serve a more heterogeneous population now than ever before and are under increasing pressure to effectively educate a student body that is diverse in terms of race and ethnicity, social class, gender, national origin and native language, sexual orientation, and physical disability (Riehl, 2000). Further supporting the need for educational leaders to develop competencies in working with students with disabilities is inherent in the tenants of NCLB.

According to NCLB requirements, all students must be tested from grades 3-8 in reading math, and science in later grades, with test results reported by subgroups (e.g., low-income, African-American, Latino, special education and limited English proficient). “Consequently, the federal government has involved itself in the daily operation of schools as never before, requiring schools to demonstrate that students are making adequate yearly progress (AYP)” (Bloomfield & Cooper, 2003, p. 6).

The support and leadership of school leaders has been documented as integral for successful school change (Fullan, 2001; Sage & Burrello, 1994). It is evident that school leaders must command knowledge of special education and special education law. However, no public college in Virginia requires even one course in special education or special education law as part of the course of study for the school administrator license (VDOE , 2004a).

A deep understanding and extensive knowledge base of special education is critically important to school leaders. This knowledge is required for two main reasons: (a) to ensure an appropriate education for all students with disabilities, as required by IDEA 97,

and (b) to minimize losing potential lawsuits resulting from inappropriate implementation of special education legal requirements (Drasgow & Yell, 2000; Drasgow, Yell, & Robinson, 2001; Hirth & Valesky, 1992).

School leaders are not expected to be experts in special education law and regulations; however, they must be familiar with the requirements of special education under federal and state law, as well as the characteristics of disabilities and promising practices in the field of education (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Patterson et al., 2000; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000; Yell, 2001). Clearly, as the intricacies of school leadership grow, the need for specialized knowledge grows.

Specialized knowledge requirements. The role of the public school leaders has been greatly impacted since the establishment of the IDEA 97. Historically, central office administrators have managed special education programming, staffing, training, financing, testing, and facilities, but today, the supervision and management of special education policies and practices is increasingly placed on the shoulders of school leaders (Patterson et al., 2000). According to Katsiyannis et al. (2002), administrators must have a solid understanding of IDEA 97's provision regarding access to the general education curriculum. Further, to be effective in meeting the needs of students with disabilities, school leaders have to possess a working knowledge of IDEA 97 (Smith & Colon, 1998).

Many school leaders agree, reporting that special education is the greatest need for professional development (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003). Thus in a recent study, principals identified assistance and information regarding successfully implementing special education programs as their greatest professional development need (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran).

A lack of knowledge on the part of school principals may well contribute to the way in which students with disabilities are served (Jacobs et al., 2004). School leaders' lack of knowledge concerning special education can manifest itself in several ways to including teacher attrition, legal entanglements, and compromised FAPE for students with disabilities (Jacobs et al.). Cypress (2003) found that the weakest knowledge base of principals concerning IDEA 97 was in the area of discipline for students with disabilities. Principals reported confusion over the number of days that a student could be suspended without receiving services.

Exacerbating school leaders' understanding regarding the legal issues in special education is a lack of rigorous competency standards in the area of special education law in leadership coursework or state licensure requirements for most states, including Virginia. In a study of school leader knowledge concerning special education law, Hirth and Valesky (1992) found significant deficits in school leader knowledge.

Also in this 1992 study, Hirth and Valesky reported that few states required administrators to complete any courses that are specifically devoted to special education law. Earlier studies conducted by Hirth and Valeskey (1989, 1991), showed that universities are confused about endorsement requirements and do not adequately prepare administrators to confront special education issues. In the Commonwealth of Virginia, neither private nor public colleges require special education law as a requirement for K-12 administration licensure course of study (VDOE, 2004a).

Further supporting the lack of special education knowledge competencies of school leader knowledge concerning special education is found in the analysis of a recent study completed by DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003).

Principals identified “special education law and implementation” (90%), “legal issues” (88%), and “non-academic student behavior” (discipline, drugs, etc.; 85%) as significant and highly significant problems or issues in organizational management. The top need for professional development was “special education law and implementation” (31 % indicated a high need and 74% said their need was high or average). More than 70% indicated a high or average need to learn more about “legal issues in education” (p. 52).

A position statement from the National Association of Secondary School Principals *Bulletin* (NASSP), (2000) reinforces the need for specialized training in special education for school leaders as well. In general, the position paper posits that principals do not receive the proper training required to adequately implement all aspects of IDEA 97. Additionally, NASSP believes that the majority of higher education training programs for principals are especially deficient with regard to special education and IDEA 97 preparation and that most lack the “real-world” guidance necessary to help principals through the quagmire of special education issues faced each day at the school level. In addition, few opportunities exist for practicing principals to enhance their capabilities. “When considering the new environment of accountability, it becomes obvious that principals need new training related to testing and how to incorporate effective policies that include special education students” (NASSP, p. 1).

More than ever before, school leaders must be knowledgeable about the added discipline provisions of IDEA 97 in order to ensure a safe learning environment for all while providing students with disabilities FAPE. This premise is further supported by the regulations of NCLB. That is, under the provisions of NCLB, 95% of all students, including

those with disabilities, must participate in state assessments and must make average yearly progress. Therefore, it is important that school leaders embrace the policy regulations of IDEA 97 to ensure that students with disabilities are provided a FAPE and make AYP as assessed by state assessments.

Legislative Impact on Practice

Students in special education make up 10-12% of all the students in public schools in the United States, and school leaders are responsible for ensuring that students in special education receive a meaningful program (Yell et al., 2003). School leaders carry great responsibility in ensuring that federal mandates are met while balancing school safety and providing FAPE for students with disabilities. Furthermore, disciplining students with disabilities while safeguarding their right to FAPE has been an important, albeit controversial, issue since the passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975.

The issue of discipline had been largely governed by court rulings, including the U.S. Supreme Court, memoranda from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) because federal legislation did not initially include provisions in this area (Katsiyannis & Maag, 2001). The task of working through the complexities of special education law, embedded with complex policy and regulation compliance requirements, is daunting for the highly skilled and well-trained central office administrator who in the past was charged with managing special education (Patterson et al., 2000).

The school leader of the 21st century has a host of leadership considerations that will require purposeful and deliberate leadership preparation that considers both general and

specialized requirements for school leaders and the students, faculties, and communities they serve.

School Leadership Considerations

Violence in the United States has reached epidemic proportions in recent decades, with a predictable spillover into public schools. The national concern over the problem of school violence has led to federal, state, and local efforts to address this issue by creating new laws and policies, which include adopting zero-tolerance approaches, conducting targeted and random searches of students and their property, using metal detectors, and preventing violence through education (Yell & Rozalski, 2000).

“School violence is now conceptualized as a multi-faceted construct that involves both criminal acts and aggression in schools, which inhibit development and learning” (Furlong & Morrison, 2000, p. 1). Students who exhibit violent and disruptive behavior have posed a challenge for school leaders to maintain safe orderly environments conducive to learning (Bias, 2002). Maintaining discipline and safety in America’s public schools is a key concern of school officials, parents, and policy makers nationwide. Not surprisingly, discipline policies and practices that ensure the well-being and safety of all students are prominent in pleas for education reform and restructuring. Burgeoning numbers of children and youth are presenting serious behavior problems in U.S. schools (White, Algozzine, Audette, Marr, & Ellis, 2001).

The public expects schools to operate in an orderly fashion free from violence (Shaul, 2001). If school leaders are to succeed in creating and maintaining safe and productive learning environments, they must assume the responsibility for implementing

effective policies and programs based on the input, perceptions, and needs of all their stakeholders (Lenhardt & Willert, 2002).

This challenge is confounded by the perception of duality of discipline rules for students with disabilities and those students without disabilities (Evans, 1999). IDEA 97's regulations apply not only to direct implementation of supports for individual students, but also address the broader issues of school safety and climates conducive to learning for all students (NASP, 2002).

The signing of the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act on June 4, 1997, appeared to resolve major disagreements on how to handle behaviors of students with disabilities and the means by which to administer the discipline provisions. Thus the resulting regulations were designed to provide a structure for removing students with disabilities who are involved with weapons or drugs or who are engaged in potentially injurious behaviors to an alternative educational setting for up to 45 days. These provisions also addressed the protections that should be provided for students with disabilities facing disciplinary actions. While this compromise appeared to be an effective balance of diverse interests, the expectations delineated in IDEA 97 posed challenges to those expected to implant them (Smith, 2000).

Thus, when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized in 1997, some school administrators and teachers raised concerns about their ability to preserve school safety and order and at the same time educate students with disabilities. Specifically, several provisions of IDEA 97 and portions of the regulations (stay-put, 10-day limit on suspensions) were perceived as limiting the authority of school personnel to remove students with disabilities from school for disciplinary reasons (Shaul, 2001).

Clearly the role of the principal is ever-changing and is steeped with mounting challenges. DiPaola and Tschannen-Moran (2003) remind us how difficult leadership responsibilities in support of learning can be; especially problematic are the legislative requirements mandated at the federal level. “Because the primary activity in schools is instruction, instructional leaders must be steeped in curriculum, instruction, and assessment in order to supervise a continuous improvement process that measures progress in raising student performance” (p. 45).

School leaders must be aware of the special needs of all students and of the latest research on learning and effective teaching strategies in order to monitor instruction and provide the necessary resources. More complex special education requirements, due to the reauthorization of IDEA and Chapter 504 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have compounded expectations for instructional leadership (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003). The challenges presented to the 21st century school leader are not only exacerbated by legislative requirements, but are more complex because of the escalating and changing needs of a more complex and diverse society (Henze, Katz, Norte, Sather, & Walker, 2002).

Dueling Perceptions of Special Education and General Education

Special education is the one of the most legislated and litigated areas in U.S. public school law (Katsiyannis & Herbst, 2004). Huge amounts of money are spent on due process hearings that arise from parental challenges to schools’ special education programming. In fact, even due process hearings that are won by school districts often result in monetary costs between \$40,000 and \$50,000 (Yell, 1998). When school districts lose hearings, the resulting payouts can be astronomical. For example, a school district in South Carolina lost a due process hearing and subsequent court cases, including a decision in the U.S. Supreme

Court. The monetary losses in this case totaled more than \$1,000,000 (Yell, Katsiyannis, & Bradley, 2003).

Courts have consistently upheld the right of parents to receive relief for violations that inhibit a student's right to FAPE. Traditionally, such relief included reimbursement for the cost of residential placements, recovery of legal fees, and reimbursement for the cost of related services. In addition, recent judiciary rulings have established the award of compensatory education as a remedy within the legal parameters of IDEA 97 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Katsiyannis & Maag, 1997).

With the passage of IDEA 97, a number of changes have been made in the policies governing special education that should be noted by school leaders. Of particular note, school leaders are now faced with a more formal requirement regarding the strategies that will be employed for students with disabilities who have significant behavior problems (Buck, Polloway, Kirkpatrick, Patrick, & Fad, 2000).

Current discipline measures have been ineffective at eliminating school discipline problems and ensuring safe schools (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Studies on the exclusionary practices of school administrators have noted that students with disabilities often get caught in the web of zero tolerance (D'Incau & Morrison, 2000). "Several researchers have presented concerns about schools being too rigid, stating that excessive structure and control in schools is counterproductive and undesirable" (Mayer & Leone, 1999, p. 334). On the other hand, school principals have argued that a separate disciplinary system for students with disabilities imposes unreasonable hardships on the school administration (Evans, 1999; Katsiyannis et al., 2002).

Since the early 1990s, zero-tolerance school discipline policies have grown dramatically (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). Zero-tolerance policies are administrative rules intended to address specific problems associated with school safety and discipline (McAndrews, 2001). Relying heavily upon school exclusion (suspension and expulsion) and school security measures (e.g., metal detectors, video surveillance, locker searches), zero tolerance policy tends to punish both major and minor incidents severely in order to “send a message” that certain behaviors can not be tolerated (Skiba & Peterson, 1999 2000).

In 1997, President William Jefferson Clinton signed the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 97). Since the 1997 Reauthorization of IDEA, school leaders have been faced with a new set of rules and restrictions for disciplining students with disabilities (Yell, 1998). The intent of the disciplinary requirements of IDEA 97 was to weave together previous precedents and decisions so as to bridge the gap between the treatment of students with disabilities and all other students in the area of school discipline (Skiba, 2002). Yet, the new regulations have not resolved the perceived conflict.

Specific concerns are related to the conflict between the Guns Free School Act (GFSA) (1984) and the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. Under the provisions of the GFSA (1984), students who bring a gun or other weapon to school are removed from school for one year. However, under IDEA 97, a student with disabilities is not necessarily be removed from school for bringing a gun or weapon to school.

If anything, the GFSA (1984) passed by Congress and the implementing regulations promulgated in March 1999 seem to have increased the disciplinary controversy (Skiba, 2002). For example, under the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, if a student with a

disability brings a gun to school and an IEP team determines that the behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability, the student is either returned to school with recommendations to the IEP team on conducting a functional behavior analysis (FBA) and developing a behavior intervention plan (BIP) to address the inappropriate behavior, or the student is placed in an interim alternative placement for up to 45 days. Additionally, in either case, there can be no discontinuation of services. Conversely, if a typically developing peer without disabilities brings a gun to school, that student may be suspended for one year or even expelled from school. This perceptual duality is of great concern to many school educators (Evans, 1999).

Shaul (2001) conducted a national study using a representative sample of secondary principals concerning discipline practice. While the majority of principals reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 had a neutral or positive impact on maintaining school safety and orderliness, 27% of the responders reported that having separate discipline policies for special education students was unfair to general education students, and 20% of the responders reported that the discipline provisions for IDEA 97 are burdensome and time consuming to implement.

According to Goldstein (2003), the controversy surrounding the perception of duality of rules concerning the discipline of students with disabilities as compared to students without disabilities continues to grow. There is a growing concern among many school leaders regarding the provisions of IDEA 97, specifically the provision of the manifestation determination review which prohibits a student with disabilities from being suspended from school if the behavior in question is determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability

“Discipline remains a highly volatile area in special education. Since 1997, more than 200 cases involving IDEA provisions were involved in due process hearings, Office of Civil Rights rulings, and the courts” (Katsiyannis et al., 2002, p. 52).

Determining the parameters of FAPE has been a challenging task for school employees-especially administrators. IDEA 97 has been instrumental in ensuring that eligible students with disabilities receive FAPE in the least restrictive environment. In particular, the 1997 amendments to IDEA have emphasized the need for improved outcomes under its provisions regarding the progress of students with disabilities in general education curricula and on state or district-wide assessments, but school leaders still find themselves increasingly challenged by the numerous special education laws and policies (Katsiyannis et al.).

School Leaders' Professional Development Needs

“Although principals do not need to be disability experts, they must have fundamental knowledge and skills that will enable them to perform essential special education leadership tasks” (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003, p. 28). Often novice administrators find themselves in the position of having to manage the duties of special education in their schools, a task for which they are often unprepared (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas; Patterson et al., 2000).

District office administrators have historically managed special education programming, staffing, training, financing, testing, and facilities, but the responsibility for managing special education policies and practices is increasingly being assigned to the building school leaders (Boscardin, 2005; DiPaola & Tschannen- Moran, 2003; Katsiyannis et al., 2002; Patterson et al., 2000). Additionally, trends to devolve decision making to

schools leave to principals and site-based committees major responsibilities for special education. Thus they must manage intricacies ranging from responding to parent concerns, allocating classroom space, hiring and assigning special education assistants, to ensuring that grab bars are installed in bathrooms (Patterson et al.).

“Traditionally, professional development for school leaders has been front-loaded: a period of intense classroom study, followed by decades of sporadic ‘updating’ on an eclectic series of topics with no systematic plan” (Lashway, 2002, p. 1). In recent years, however, policymakers, as well as practitioners, have begun to realize the value of coherent professional development tailored to the needs of leaders and the students they serve (Lashway). The recent passage of the No Child Left Behind Act and the reauthorization of IDEA have increased attention to professional development for school leaders by putting the full weight of federal policy behind the accountability movement, mandating that schools bring *all* children—including racial minorities, English-language learners, and students with disabilities—to an adequate level of progress (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Lashway).

Effective school leaders must be reflective and have a sense of their strengths, as well as areas that are in need of refining (Boscardin, 2005). In addition, effective school leaders must have a keen understanding of teaching and learning (Hoy & Hoy, 2003). Effective school leaders need to develop a working knowledge about disabilities and the unique learning and behavioral challenges different conditions present. They need a thorough understanding of laws that protect the educational rights of students with disabilities. Without this solid understanding of IDEA 97, school leaders cannot administer special education programs effectively (Bateman & Bateman, 2001; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Patterson et al., 2000).

Summary

Restructuring American education to establish meaningful education standards (i.e., student outcomes) and holding schools accountable for accomplishing these goals with each and every student requires great commitment and effort, collectively and individually (Falvey, Givner, & Kimm, 1995). “As the nation seeks significant reforms in education through standards and accountability, it increasingly looks to principals to lead the way” (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003, p. 43).

School leaders of the 21st century face a host of responsibilities to include reform initiatives, school safety, and student achievement for every child. “Next to ‘crisis,’ the word most commonly attached to school leadership in recent years has been “impossible” (Lashway, 2002, p.13). “Special education presents one of the most significant challenges facing school leaders in this era of comprehensive school reform” (DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003, p. 5).

For meaningful reform to occur in the instructional programs in special education, principals need a basic knowledge of best practices in order to be able to supervise and support the teachers who are serving students through those programs (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Jacobs et al., 2004; Patterson et al., 2000). Therefore, there exists a great need for professional development to meet these needs of the 21st century school leader.

In Assistant Secretary of Education Pasternack’s comments before the U. S. Senate Subcommittee, he echoed similiar sentiments:

The successful implementation of IDEA is perhaps most critically dependent on the quality of the people who implement the principles contained in the law-the teachers,

para-educators, related service providers and administrators, in cooperation with the parents and the students. Unfortunately, many general and special education teachers, as well as administrators and other school personnel who work with them, are often ill prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities. (Pasternack, as cited in President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002, p. 57)

With these daunting expectations in mind, this research has been undertaken to provide information, resources, and recommendations for school leaders of the 21st century. The next chapter will describe the research methodology used. It describes the sample population, data collection methods, instrumentation, and the statistical analysis measures that were used to examine the information obtained from surveys completed by 300 randomly selected school leaders who supervise special education in Virginia. The research examined the extent of knowledge that school leaders report to have concerning the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 and their perceptions of how those provisions impact their ability to provide safe and orderly schools. Moreover, professional development needs to effectively manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 were examined.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The review of the extant literature in the previous chapter suggests that there are significant concerns about school leaders' knowledge of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 and their ability to maintain safe and orderly learning environments for all children in a standards-reform environment. This research examined Virginia school leaders' perceptions of the impact of the discipline provisions on their ability to meet the initiatives required under IDEA 97. Moreover, knowledge levels and professional development needs among the school leaders at different school levels were examined.

Overarching Research Questions

Currently, the reauthorization of IDEA 97 is completed, and the Virginia law will have to be revised to meet the new IDEA 2004. With this revision of Virginia law, new provisions for providing services to students with disabilities will also be forthcoming; however, until new regulations from the state are made available, school leaders must comply with the existing laws.

The overarching questions answered in this research study were: (a) To what extent are school leaders aware of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, which have been in place since 2001? (b) How do school leaders view the impact of those provisions on their ability to maintain a safe learning environment for all? And (c) Which areas of the discipline provisions do school leaders identify as requiring the highest priority for professional development?

Specific Research Questions

Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perception of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest impact on school safety?

1. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the current IDEA 97 discipline provisions?
2. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of professional development needs concerning the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

Sample Population

The sample population consisted of 300 randomly selected school leaders who supervise special education in four randomly selected Regional Study Groups of the State Superintendent's Advisory Council (Regions); 114 responded to the survey. The proposed participants for this study were chosen using two types of random sampling procedures. Initially, four of the eight regions were selected using a Table of Random Numbers. Once the four regions were randomly selected, a stratified random sampling of 100 school leaders in each stratum (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) was conducted using a Table of Random Numbers. Only comprehensive schools are reflected in Table 2.

Table 2

Number of Comprehensive Schools in Regional Study Groups 1, 2, 3, 6

Region	Elementary	Middle	High
1	42	21	22
2	205	70	51
3	42	21	22
6	97	29	26

Participant Selection

The population from which the participants were drawn consists of 648 school leaders in the four regions listed in Table 2. The desired sample of participants included a minimum of 99 school leaders, with an approximately equal distribution of participants in each stratum (i.e., approximately 33 elementary, 33 middle school, 33 high school leaders). Over-sampling was employed to increase the likelihood of achieving equal representation across strata.

A database of educational leaders in Virginia schools found on the Virginia Department of Education website (VDOE, 2004b) was used to access contact names and their respective email addresses, phone numbers, and mailing addresses. To ensure accuracy of the information of school leaders supervising special education, the researcher contacted each school by email or phone for verification. Once the participants' information was verified, requests were sent via U.S. Postal mail to each school leader supervising special education to complete the survey.

Sample Population Data Narrative

The sample population consisted of 300 randomly selected school leaders who supervise special education in schools in four randomly selected regions of Virginia. A stratified random sampling was used to ensure that 100 representatives from each strata (elementary, middle, high schools) were included in the sample.

School leaders from 47 school districts participated in the survey. During the collection of survey responses, four school districts terminated the study and/or did not allow the research to be conducted in their districts because research protocol was not followed. In each of the school districts that terminated the study, an email was sent to the researcher from the Director of Accountability stating that research guidelines for the district had not been followed; however, in each of the four districts that disallowed the research, one or more surveys were received from individual school leaders in those districts.

Of the 300 surveys distributed to the potential respondents, 114 usable surveys were returned for analysis. Three submissions were excluded from the data pool because the respondents did not complete all the questions on the web-based survey. These 114 responses represented a 38.3% return rate, and included 37 elementary school leaders, 37 middle school leaders, and 40 high school leaders.

Sample Population Demographics

The survey instrument requested demographic information about each school leader. Of particular importance to the data analysis was gender, position, and ethnicity of the respondents.

Gender. Of the 114 responses collected from Virginia school leaders, 62 respondents (54.4%) were female and 52 respondents (45.6%) were male. Overall, the gender of

respondents differed among the levels of schools. Females dominated the ranks of school leaders at the elementary level with 32 (86.5%) respondents; only five (13.5%) school leaders at the elementary level responding to the survey were male. Middle school leaders' gender was more evenly distributed, with 17 (45.9%) female and 20 (54.1%) male respondents to the survey. High school leaders' gender contrasted sharply with that of elementary school leaders. That is males dominated the school leader ranks with 27 (67.5%) responding to the survey. Only 13 (32%) females at the high school level responded to the survey.

Position. Principals' responses to the survey contributed 64.9% of the total responses to the survey. Assistant principals at 31.5 % and other administrators at 3.6% made up the remainder of the survey responders.

Ethnicity. School leaders reporting ethnicity as Caucasian/White at 75.4% dominated the ethnicity of the sample population respondents. School leaders reported ethnicity at 21.9% for African-American/Black, and 2.7% of the responders reported ethnicity as Other. Table 3 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the responding population disaggregated by school level, position, ethnicity, and gender.

Methodology

The 300 school leaders in Regions 1, 2, 3, and 6 selected by using stratified random sampling received a telephone or email pre-contact prior to receiving a paper copy of the Discipline Survey (see Appendix A). According to Gall et al. (1996), pre-contacts are effective because they alert respondents to the imminent arrival of the questionnaire, thereby reducing the chance that the survey will inadvertently be discarded.

Table 3

Response Rates and Characteristics of Sample Population

School Level/Ethnicity	Principal		Assistant Principal		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	24	64.86	12	32.43	1	2.70
White	19	51.35	8	21.62	1	2.70
Female	17	45.94	6	16.02	1	2.70
Black	4	10.81	4	10.81		
Female	3	8.10	4	10.81		
Male	1	2.70				
Other	1	2.70				
Female	1	2.70				
Male						
Middle	24	64.86	13	35.13		
White	16	43.24	11	29.72		
Female	7	21.62	3	8.10		
Male	9	24.32	8	21.62		
Black	7	18.92	2	5.40		
Female	4	10.8	2	5.40		
Male	3	8.10				
Other	1	2.70				
Female	1	2.70				
Male						
High	26	65.00	11	30.00	3	7.50
White	22	55.00	7	20.00	2	5.00
Female	8	20.00	2	5.0		
Male	14	35.00	5	12.50	2	5.00
Black	4	10.00	3	7.50		
Female	2	5.00	1	2.50		
Male	2	5.00	2	5.00		
Other					1	2.50
Female						
Male					1	2.50

Table 3

Response Rates and Characteristics of Sample Population

School Level/Ethnicity	Principal		Assistant Principal		Other	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Elementary	24	64.86	12	32.43	1	2.70
White	19	51.35	8	21.62	1	2.70
Female	17	45.94	6	16.02	1	2.70
Black	4	10.81	4	10.81		
Female	3	8.10	4	10.81		
Male	1	2.70				
Other	1	2.70				
Female	1	2.70				
Male						
Middle	24	64.86	13	35.13		
White	16	43.24	11	29.72		
Female	7	21.62	3	8.10		
Male	9	24.32	8	21.62		
Black	7	18.92	2	5.40		
Female	4	10.8	2	5.40		
Male	3	8.10				
Other	1	2.70				
Female	1	2.70				
Male						
High	26	65.00	11	30.00	3	7.50
White	22	55.00	7	20.00	2	5.00
Female	8	20.00	2	5.0		
Male	14	35.00	5	12.50	2	5.00
Black	4	10.00	3	7.50		
Female	2	5.00	1	2.50		
Male	2	5.00	2	5.00		
Other					1	2.50
Female						
Male					1	2.50

Pre-contacts also provide a sense of personal contact and aid in increasing the return rate because respondents may feel more committed to participate.

Besides receiving a paper copy of the survey instrument with instructions for how to complete the form either electronically or using paper and pencil (see Appendix A), participants received a cover letter outlining the nature of the study (see Appendix B), a release of information form (see Appendix B), and a self-addressed and stamped envelope.

Additionally, as an incentive, a \$2.00 bill was attached to the paper copy of the initial mailing to all participants; moreover, the respondents were offered an opportunity to be entered in a \$50.00 drawing if the survey was completed online by the initial due date. Survey respondents who elected to complete the survey on paper and met the first timeline were eligible for a \$25.00 drawing.

To maximize generalizability, at least 33 school leaders from each stratum had to respond to the survey. The proposed methodology included a follow-up request for participation using second mailings, emails, and/or phone calls in the event that the initial due-date response rate was less than 50% and each stratum goal was not met. Fortunately, the requisite responder rate for analysis was achieved after the follow-up mailings/phone calls/emails had been conducted. However, it should be noted that those follow-up contacts requesting compliance were pleading and personal in nature to increase return rate (Dillman, Tortora, & Bowker, 1998; Gall et al., 1996; Tourangeau, Cooper, & Stieger, 2001). Additionally, the researcher utilized professional networks to include calling known associates and asking them to contact colleagues in their schools who were in the sample population.

Pilot Studies

A pilot study is a small-scale, preliminary investigation that is conducted to develop and test the measures or procedures that will be used in a study (Gall et al., 1996). Two pilot studies were conducted prior to the implementation of the full-scale research.

First pilot. The instrument (see Appendix A) was field-tested on two samples. First the instrument accompanied by a pilot letter with a \$2.00 bill attached (see Appendix C) and a validity letter (see Appendix E) were provided to a small convenience sample consisting of three Caucasian females who supervised special education in either an elementary school, middle school, or a high school in one school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The instrument and accompanying letters were hand delivered.

The three school leaders were encouraged to provide as much feedback as possible concerning the wording of the questions, the directions, as well as the format of the presentation. After reviewing feedback from the three school leaders and making any necessary revisions, the researcher conducted the second pilot study.

Second pilot. Nine school leaders who supervised special education in one school district in the Commonwealth of Virginia participated in the second pilot, using a convenience sampling. The demographics of the second pilot population consisted of four Caucasian females (44.4%), two African-American males (22.2%), two Caucasian males (22.2%), and one African-American female (11.1%). By school level the demographics of the pilot population consisted of (a) two Caucasian females (22.2%) and one African-American female (11.1%) at the elementary school level; (b) two African-American males (22.2%) and one Caucasian female (11.1%) at the middle school level; and (c) two Caucasian males (22.2%) and one Caucasian female (11.1%) at the high school level.

The three elementary, three middle school and three high school leaders participating in the second pilot study received the survey (see Appendix A), the pilot letter (see Appendix D) and the validity letter (see Appendix E) both electronically and through U.S. mail. A \$2.00 bill and a stamped self-addressed envelope were attached to the hardcopy of the pilot letter requesting participation in the pilot study.

The second pilot study was designed to test not only the language and format of the survey, but it also the responders' opinions of the overall technology aspects of the study (see Appendix E). Dillman et al. (1998) caution constructors of web-based surveys to ensure that the surveys are "user friendly" so that the responder is more likely to answer the questions as intended; also reliability of the instrument was strengthened due to the pilot process. Once feedback was received from the pilot study, revisions were made with the committee members' agreement.

Instrumentation

The survey used in this study was an instrument adapted from a scale developed and used by Bias (2002) in her dissertation. The scale adaptation included several formatting modifications; the content of the instrument was not changed (see Appendix A). Dr. Bias provided permission to use her instrument with modifications. Dr. Bias also asked by email correspondence that once the study had been completed, a copy of the dissertation to be sent to her via email.

The survey (see Appendix A) used regulatory language from IDEA 97, and was intended to examine the knowledge level of school leaders about the IDEA 97 discipline provisions, their perceptions of the extent to which the discipline provisions impact their ability to maintain a safe school environment, and which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline

provisions are perceived by school leaders as having the greatest priority for professional development. Additionally, participants were asked to indicate their employment position, school level, number of students with disabilities, and total school enrollment, as well as gender and ethnicity of the responder.

The survey instrument questions comprised five Knowledge Dimensions (Authority of School Personnel, FAPE, Manifestation Determination Review, Appeals, and IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible) for a total of 28 questions with three parts each (i.e., Safety Domain, Knowledge Level Domain, Professional Development Domain). Table 4 describes the distribution the questions across Knowledge Dimensions.

Table 4

Knowledge Dimensions of Survey Research Questions

Knowledge Dimension	Survey Questions
Authority of School Personnel	1-3, 7-13, 27, 28
Free Appropriate Public Education	4
Manifestation Review	5, 6, 14, 17, 18
Appeals	15-16
IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible	19-26

Statistical Analyses

To answer Research Question 1, a between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to compare the mean scores of leaders from three school levels (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school) about their perceptions of the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on maintaining a safe school. To answer Research

Question 2, an ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean scores of leaders from three school levels (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school) about their knowledge level regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. Finally, to answer Research Question 3, an ANOVA was conducted to compare the mean scores of leaders from three school levels (i.e., elementary, middle school, high school) about their perceptions of the most significant professional development needs concerning the discipline provisions of IDEA 97.

The level of significance (alpha level) used with each ANOVA was set at .05 on all statistical analyses for each question. An alpha level of .05 indicates that it is very unlikely (5 out of 100 chances) that the observed difference in the means occurred by chance (Gall et al., 1996). Table 5 lists the statistical analysis used for each research question.

To more closely examine the Knowledge Dimensions by grade level and Knowledge Domain, additional contrasts of the means for each Knowledge Dimension were conducted using an ANOVA. Further, because gender was grossly disproportionate in favor of female administrators at the elementary grade level and in favor of males at the high school level, a series of follow-up independent *t*-tests were performed to test for possible gender effects.

Validity Considerations

Threats to validity of this research were addressed in a number of ways. First, the research instrument was modeled after the data collection instrument used in a dissertation study conducted by Bias (2002). Further, the modified instrument using regulatory language from IDEA 97 was subjected to peer review, committee review, and review from two pilot studies to ensure that the instrument tested what it was designed to test.

Table 5

Research Analysis Matrix

Research Question	Data Collection	Data Analysis
1 Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perception of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest impact on school safety?	Survey Instrument—Safety Domain items using a Likert Rating Scale (see Appendix A)	ANOVA to compare the means between the school levels (elementary, middle, high) across Knowledge Dimensions and Knowledge Domains using SPSS (statistical software) Independent <i>t</i> -tests
2. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the current IDEA 97 discipline provisions?	Survey Instrument—Knowledge Domain items using a Likert Rating Scale (see Appendix A)	ANOVA to compare the means between the school levels (elementary, middle, high) across Knowledge Dimensions and Knowledge Domains using SPSS (statistical software) Independent <i>t</i> -tests
3. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of professional development needs?	Survey Instrument—Professional Development items using a Likert Rating Scale (see Appendix A)	ANOVA to compare the means between the school levels (elementary, middle, high) across Knowledge Dimensions and Knowledge Domains using SPSS (statistical software) Independent <i>t</i> -tests

During both pilot programs, participants were asked to complete a validity-questionnaire (see Appendix E) to ensure that what was being tested was indeed being tested. Not only is the language and format of the survey addressed in the validity-questionnaire, but one question also addressed the ease of the web-based survey that resulted in positive comments

to the usage and ease of the web site; therefore, this researcher posits that the instrument has both content and face validity and does measure what it purports to measure.

Reliability Considerations

Once returned surveys were received, an analysis of reliability was conducted to ensure it had sufficient internal consistency for use in this research. Additionally, the Knowledge Domains of the survey, Safety, Knowledge Level, and Professional Development were analyzed to further ensure internal consistency.

Ethical Treatment of Participants

The cover letter (see Appendix B) that accompanied the survey instrument (see Appendix A) fully disclosed that some personal information had to be provided during completion of the survey. Human Subjects Review Board Letter of Approval was received prior to conducting any research (see Appendix F).

Summary

Overall, this chapter discussed the methodology and the data types that was used to conduct the research. The remaining chapters address the analyses of the collected data in Chapter 4, and discussion, recommendations, and implications for future research are presented in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Findings and Conclusions

This chapter is to presents the findings and conclusions of the study. Toward this end, it is organized as follows, Research Questions, Highlights of the Methodology, Sample Population and Narrative Data, Statistical Analysis, Conclusions, and Summary.

The overarching questions answered in this research study were: (a) To what extent are school leaders aware of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 which have been in place since 2001? and (b) How do school leaders view the impact of those provisions on their ability to maintain a safe learning environment for all?

Specific Research Questions

1. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest effects on school safety?
2. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?
3. Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of professional development needs in relation to the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

Highlights of Methodology

To answer the specific research questions, a survey was used to investigate the perceptions of a randomly selected sample drawn from a population of 648 school leaders in the four regions described in Table 2. The desired sample of participants included a minimum of 99 school leaders, with an approximately equal distribution of participants in each stratum (i.e., approximately 33 elementary, 33 middle school, 33 high school leaders).

Over-sampling was employed to increase the likelihood of equal representation across strata; therefore, the sample population consisted of 300 randomly selected school leaders who supervise special education in Virginia schools.

Selected school leaders were asked to answer questions concerning the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. A web-based dimension was used to host the survey for data collection purposes and another domain was used to collect and maintain the responses. Additionally, a paper copy of the survey was mailed to each randomly selected school leader requesting his or her participation. All responses were eventually keyed into the domain so they could be exported later into an Excel spreadsheet and then imported into SPSS for statistical analysis.

Statistical Analyses

Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, post hoc analyses, *t*-tests, and reliability analyses were conducted to analyze the data, thereby answering the research questions and providing additional information to consider for further research.

Descriptive analyses. Mean scores and standard deviations were computed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for each of the Research Domains (i.e., Safety, Knowledge Level, Professional Development) for each level of school leader. For the purposes of discussion of the means, it should be noted that a high mean score indicates the responders hold a lower impact perception. Table 6 represents the respective means and standard deviations for the school level strata and Research Domains.

Table 6

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation for Responses by School Level and Research Question Domains

School Level		Safety	Knowledge	Professional Development
Elementary	<i>M</i>	52.97	64.72	65.16
	<i>SD</i>	20.51	17.76	23.35
	<i>N</i>	37	37	37
Middle	<i>M</i>	57.16	53.00	68.43
	<i>N</i>	37	37	37
	<i>SD</i>	21.95	17.20	28.40
High	<i>M</i>	62.47	55.97	69.22
	<i>SD</i>	19.66	18.10	27.01
	<i>N</i>	40	40	40
Total	<i>M</i>	57.66	57.85	67.64
	<i>SD</i>	20.77	18.23	26.18
	<i>N</i>	114	114	114

Virginia school leaders' responses regarding the Safety Domain resulted in mean scores for elementary, middle and high school leaders of 52.97, 57.16, and 62.47, respectively, regarding the impact of discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on school safety. The range of possible scores was from 28 to 140 with a midpoint of 84.

The mean scores demonstrated that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 were not perceived as having a negative impact on school safety with mean scores of 52.97, 57.16 and 62.47 for elementary, middle, and high school leaders, respectively, which are well below

the most neutral midpoint of 84. Respondents generally answered this question as SOMEWHAT POSITIVE or NO IMPACT.

School leaders' responses to the Knowledge Domain resulted in mean scores for elementary, middle and high school leaders of 64.72, 53.00, and 55.97, respectively. The range of possible scores was 28 to 140 with a midpoint of 84.

Elementary school leaders reported a much lower knowledge level regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 than did their secondary counterparts with a mean of 64.72 as compared to middle and high school leaders with mean scores of 53.00 and 55.97, respectively. Elementary school leaders generally responded SOMEWHAT LOW and MODERATE regarding their knowledge level of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. Secondary school leaders generally reported their knowledge level regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 as VERY HIGH or SOMEWHAT HIGH, with middle school leaders reporting a higher knowledge level than both elementary and high school leaders.

School leaders' responses to the Professional Development Domain resulted in the following mean scores for elementary, middle and high school leaders of 65.16, 68.43, and 69.22, respectively. The range of possible scores was 28 to 140 with a midpoint of 84. Each level of Virginia school leaders responding to the survey noted a high need for professional development with mean scores well below the most neutral midpoint of 84. Thus, respondents across levels generally reported VERY HIGH or SOMEWHAT HIGH need for professional development regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97.

To further examine the respondents' knowledge levels and perceptions, the means of the Safety, Knowledge Level, and Professional Development Domain scores for each Knowledge Dimension described in Table 4 (e.g., Authority of School Personnel, FAPE,

Manifestation Review, Appeals, and IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible) were computed by school level. For the purposes of discussion, the midpoint of the Likert Scale is 3, denoting the most neutral point. Any mean scores below the midpoint denote a more positive impact on school safety, a higher knowledge level, or a higher need for professional development.

Across Knowledge Dimensions and school levels for the Safety Domain, school leaders reported mean scores below the midpoint, denoting the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 positively impact their ability to maintain safe schools. The areas with the most positive impact on school safety varied somewhat by school level; however, across Knowledge Dimensions all levels of school leaders noted that the Knowledge Dimensions of Manifestation Determination Review and Authority of School Personnel had the most positive impact on school safety.

Overall, middle school leaders reported lower mean scores for the Safety Domain across Knowledge Dimensions denoting a perception that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 more positively impact school safety in the middle schools. Table 7 lists the mean scores and standard deviation scores for the Knowledge Dimensions of the Safety Domain.

Across Knowledge Dimensions and school levels for the Knowledge Level Domain, school leaders reported mean scores below the midpoint, denoting a relatively high level of knowledge regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. The Knowledge Dimension mean scores varied somewhat by school level and Knowledge Domain; however, across Knowledge Dimensions, all levels of respondents reported the Knowledge Dimensions of Authority of School Personnel had the lowest mean or highest knowledge level. Overall, middle school leaders reported lower mean scores for the Knowledge Level Domain across

Knowledge Dimensions. Table 8 describes the mean scores and standard deviations for Knowledge Dimensions by school levels.

Table 7

Safety Domain Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Responses to Knowledge Dimensions by School Level

Knowledge Dimension	Elementary		Middle		High	
Authority of School Personnel	<i>M</i>	1.81	<i>M</i>	1.93	<i>M</i>	2.22
	<i>SD</i>	0.95	<i>SD</i>	1.12	<i>SD</i>	1.08
FAPE	<i>M</i>	2.10	<i>M</i>	1.973	<i>M</i>	2.50
	<i>SD</i>	1.24	<i>SD</i>	1.01	<i>SD</i>	1.28
Manifestation Review	<i>M</i>	1.59	<i>M</i>	1.77	<i>M</i>	1.88
	<i>SD</i>	0.51	<i>SD</i>	1.08	<i>SD</i>	0.50
Appeals	<i>M</i>	2.27	<i>M</i>	2.36	<i>M</i>	2.6
	<i>SD</i>	0.76	<i>SD</i>	0.79	<i>SD</i>	1.01
IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible	<i>M</i>	2.08	<i>M</i>	2.30	<i>M</i>	2.41
	<i>SD</i>	0.93	<i>SD</i>	2.84	<i>SD</i>	1.18

scores and standard deviation scores for the Knowledge Level Domain across Knowledge Dimensions.

Across Knowledge Dimensions and school levels for the Professional Development Domain, school leaders reported mean scores below the midpoint denoting a relatively positive perception regarding the need for professional development to effectively manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. The Knowledge Dimension mean scores varied somewhat by school level and Knowledge Dimension. Overall, elementary school

Table 8

Knowledge Level Domain Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Responses to Knowledge Dimensions by School Level

Knowledge Dimension	Elementary		Middle		High	
Authority of School						
Personnel	<i>M</i>	1.60	<i>M</i>	1.26	<i>M</i>	1.36
	<i>SD</i>	1.84	<i>SD</i>	1.80	<i>SD</i>	1.88
FAPE	<i>M</i>	1.97	<i>M</i>	1.62	<i>M</i>	1.74
	<i>SD</i>	1.24	<i>SD</i>	1.04	<i>SD</i>	1.04
Manifestation Review	<i>M</i>	2.41	<i>M</i>	1.97	<i>M</i>	2.00
	<i>SD</i>	0.86	<i>SD</i>	1.08	<i>SD</i>	0.66
Appeals	<i>M</i>	2.47	<i>M</i>	1.98	<i>M</i>	2.15
	<i>SD</i>	1.46	<i>SD</i>	1.98	<i>SD</i>	1.71
IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible	<i>M</i>	2.84	<i>M</i>	2.40	<i>M</i>	2.44
	<i>SD</i>	1.13	<i>SD</i>	1.26	<i>SD</i>	1.18

leaders reported lower mean scores for the Professional Development Domain across Knowledge Dimensions, denoting a higher perception of professional development needs to effectively manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. Table 9 describes the mean scores and standard deviation scores for the Knowledge Level Domain across Knowledge Dimensions.

Table 9

Professional Development Domain Mean and Standard Deviation Scores for Responses to Research Dimensions by School Level

Dimension	Elementary		Middle		High	
Authority of School						
Personnel	<i>M</i>	2.33	<i>M</i>	2.54	<i>M</i>	2.49
	<i>SD</i>	0.95	<i>SD</i>	1.13	<i>SD</i>	1.08
FAPE	<i>M</i>	2.29	<i>M</i>	2.78	<i>M</i>	2.60
	<i>SD</i>	1.24	<i>SD</i>	1.01	<i>SD</i>	0.86
Manifestation Review	<i>M</i>	2.34	<i>M</i>	2.34	<i>M</i>	2.47
	<i>SD</i>	0.86	<i>SD</i>	1.08	<i>SD</i>	0.50
Appeals	<i>M</i>	2.35	<i>M</i>	2.41	<i>M</i>	2.57
	<i>SD</i>	0.86	<i>SD</i>	1.44	<i>SD</i>	1.01
IDEA 97 Protections for Students Not Yet Eligible	<i>M</i>	2.31	<i>M</i>	2.32	<i>M</i>	2.40
	<i>SD</i>	1.13	<i>SD</i>	1.27	<i>SD</i>	1.18

Analysis of variance (ANOVA). For each specific research questions, an ANOVA was conducted to contrast the mean scores across the three school levels. Each research question and its ANOVA results follow. Because gender was grossly disproportionate in favor of female administrators at the elementary grade level and in favor of males at the high school level, a series of follow up independent t-tests were conducted to test for possible gender effects. None of the t-tests was significant, revealing that administrator mean scores on knowledge, safety or staff development did not differ significantly as a function of either grade level or administrator gender. Additionally, for each Knowledge Dimension across the Research Domains of Safety, Knowledge Level, and Professional Development, an

ANOVA was conducted to contrast the means scores across school levels. Table 10 depicts the results of the ANOVA analyses used to answer each of the specific research questions.

Research Question 1: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perception of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest impact on school safety?

The ANOVA contrasting the Safety Domain across school levels revealed no significant differences between the means of respondents at the elementary, middle and high school levels concerning their perceptions of the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on school safety. Similarly, the ANOVA contrasting Knowledge Dimensions by school level for the Safety Domain revealed no significant differences among the school leaders.

Overall, school leaders reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 had a neutral or positive impact on school safety. In other words, school leaders in Virginia responding to this survey found that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 are not an impediment to their maintaining safe learning environments. *Research Question 2: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the current IDEA 97 discipline provisions?*

The ANOVA contrasting the Knowledge Level Domain across school levels revealed a significant difference in the mean scores of school leaders at different levels. A post hoc analysis using a Tukey Honestly Significant Difference (i.e., HSD) followed up on

Table 10

Analysis of Variance Scores for Specific Research Questions

Knowledge Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Safety	Between Groups	1749.35	2	874.67	2.065	.13
	Within Groups	47025.97	111	423.65		
	Total	48775.33	113			
Knowledge Level	Between Groups	2762.19	2	1381.09	4.04	.01
	Within Groups	89.651	111	.808		
	Total	92.070	113			
Professional Development	Between Groups	350.88	2	175.44	.252	.77
	Within Groups	77129.08	111	694.85		
	Total	77479.96	113			

this significant main effect. The result was a significant difference in the mean scores of knowledge between elementary school leaders and middle school leaders. That is, elementary school leaders reported a significantly lower knowledge level of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 than did middle school leaders. Specifically, the ANOVA contrasting Knowledge Dimensions revealed a significant difference among school leaders at different school levels in two Knowledge Dimensions, Authority of School Personnel and

Manifestation Determination Review. Similarly, a post hoc analyses using a Tukey HSD resulted in a significant difference between elementary and middle school leaders regarding the Knowledge Dimensions, Authority and Manifestation Determination, with elementary school leaders reporting a much lower knowledge level in both Knowledge Dimensions than reported by middle school leaders.

The Tukey HSD analysis further resulted in a significant difference between elementary school leaders and high school leaders regarding Authority of School Personnel, with elementary leaders reporting a much lower knowledge level than the high school leaders. No other Knowledge Dimensions reached significance in the statistical analyses. Table 11 lists the ANOVA results for each Knowledge Dimension ANOVA.

Research Question 3: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of professional development needs concerning the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

The ANOVA contrasting the Professional Development Domain revealed no significant differences in the mean scores of leaders at different levels. The ANOVA contrasting Knowledge Dimensions for the Professional Development Domain by school level revealed no significant differences in the mean scores of leaders at different levels.

Reliability analyses. Reliability of the instrument used for this research was calculated using SPSS. A reliability alpha of .96 was obtained for the survey total scale score. Further analysis of each of the three research domains, Safety, Knowledge Level and Professional Development, resulted in the following coefficient alphas: Safety, .95; Knowledge, .96; and Professional development, .98. These reliability scores are very high and denote strong internal consistency

Table 11

Knowledge Domain Analysis of Variance Scores for Knowledge Dimensions

Knowledge Dimension		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
AUTHORIT	Between Groups	322.458	2	161.229	5.460	.005
	Within Groups	3277.481	111	29.527		
	Total	3599.939	113			
FAPEK	Between Groups	2.419	2	1.210	1.498	.228
	Within Groups	89.651	111	.808		
	Total	92.070	113			
MDRK	Between Groups	92.295	2	46.147	3.207	.044
	Within Groups	1597.459	111	14.392		
	Total	1689.754	113			
APPEALSK	Between Groups	18.174	2	9.087	2.855	.062
	Within Groups	353.265	111	3.183		
	Total	371.439	113			
PROTECTK	Between Groups	278.608	2	139.304	2.668	.074
	Within Groups	5795.883	111	52.215		
	Total	6074.491	113			

Validity Analyses. Threats to the validity of this research were addressed in a number of ways. The research instrument was modeled after the data collection instrument used for a dissertation study conducted by Bias (2002). The modified instrument using regulatory language from IDEA 97 was subjected to peer review, committee review, as well as review of data from two pilot studies to ensure that it tested what it was designed to test.

During both pilot programs, participants were asked to complete a validity-questionnaire (see Appendix E) to ensure that the Knowledge Domains were indeed being tested. Not only was the language and format of the survey addressed in the validity-questionnaire, but one question also addressed the ease of the web-based survey that resulted in positive comments related to the usage and ease of the web site; therefore, this researcher posits that the instrument has both content and face validity and measures what it purports to measure.

Conclusion

From the statistical analysis, the following conclusions can be made regarding the research:

1. Using SPSS to calculate the significance of the differences in the mean scores of school leaders in each school level across the Research Domains of Safety, Knowledge Level, and Professional Development, only one difference resulted in a significant discrepancy between means across domains. The domain of Knowledge denoted a significant difference ($F_{(2, 111)} = 4.04, p < .01$) between the three school levels. A post hoc analysis using a Tukey HSD followed up on this significant main effect and resulted in a significant difference in the mean scores of knowledge between elementary school leaders and middle school leaders, with elementary

school leaders reporting a significantly lower knowledge level than the middle school leaders. Further, their elementary school leaders reported a lower knowledge level than high school leaders; however, the difference was not significant. ANOVA analyses of the dimensions and post hoc analyses using a Tukey HSD resulted in a significant difference between elementary and middle school leaders regarding the Research Dimensions, Authority and Manifestation Determination. The Tukey HSD further resulted in a significant difference between elementary and high school leaders regarding Authority. No other areas reached significance in the statistical analyses.

2. Because gender was grossly disproportionate in favor of female administrators at the elementary grade level and in favor of males at the high school level, a series of follow up independent *t*-tests were conducted to test for possible gender effects. None of the *t*-tests was significant, revealing that administrator mean scores on knowledge, safety or staff development did not differ significantly as a function of either grade level or administrator gender.
3. School leaders at all levels reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 do not negatively impact school safety, with mean scores for elementary, middle and high school leaders of 52.97, 57.16, and 62.47, respectively. The range of possible scores was 28 to 140 with a midpoint of 84; therefore, these mean scores are below the midpoint or most neutral response.
4. School leaders at all levels reported a need for professional development, with mean scores of 65.16, 68.43, and 69.22. The range of possible scores was 28 to 140 with a midpoint of 84. These mean scores are below the most neutral mid-point of 84.

5. The instrument has strong internal consistency reliability as evidenced by its total scale reliability of .96, and scale reliabilities that range from .95 to .97. A reliability alpha of .96 was obtained for the survey total scale score. Further analysis of each of the three research domains resulted in the following coefficient alphas: Safety, .95; Knowledge, .96; and Professional Development, .98. These reliability scores are very high and denote strong internal consistency.
6. Since the instrument uses regulatory language from IDEA 97, it has face validity and content validity.
7. Generalization of the results is compromised by the return rate (38%) and the termination of the study by four relatively large urban school districts.

Summary

Overall the findings in this research are consistent with the results of the review of the extant literature. That is, school leaders in this study reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 are not viewed as having a negative impact on maintaining school safety. However, school leaders also reported that there is a great need for further professional development to manage the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 demonstrating their awareness of the great complexities of the special education law.

A significant difference ($p < .05$) was found between the knowledge level of elementary school leaders and their middle school counterparts when the means were compared using an ANOVA and Tukey HSD; however, no significant difference was found among school leaders for the Professional Development Domain.

While the study findings are largely consistent with the extant literature review, it

should be noted that the study is limited by the return rate of 38% and the termination of the study in four large urban school districts in Virginia. Chapter 5 will address discussion of the analysis, as well as recommendations to strengthen the research methodology for future research implications.

Chapter 5: Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to examine (a) the perceptions of school leaders regarding the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on maintaining a safe school environment; (b) the extent to which school leaders are aware of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97; and (c) which areas of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 are regarded by school leaders as having the highest priority for professional development considerations to ensure a safe learning environment.

An ANOVA was used to determine if there were any significant differences, at the .05 confidence level, among school leaders at the elementary, middle, and high schools regarding their perceptions of the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 in three dimensions (e.g., Safety, Knowledge Level, Professional Development). A summary of the research findings is presented in this chapter. Additionally, implications and applications of this research for administrative practice are discussed. Finally, recommendations for future research are also offered.

Summary of Findings

In order to identify school leaders' perceptions of the impact of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 on maintaining school safety, their knowledge level, and professional development needs in the Commonwealth of Virginia, an equal-size stratified random sample of 100 elementary, 100 middle, and 100 high school leaders was employed. The school leader respondents served as the building principal, assistant principal, or administrative interns in their respective schools. The participants were randomly selected using a stratified random sample procedure from the data base provided by the Virginia Department of Education.

Each respondent was asked to complete a survey that was based upon a survey instrument developed by Dr. Kimberly Bias for her 2002 dissertation. The survey (see Appendix A) used regulatory language from IDEA 97, and was intended to examine the knowledge level of school leaders about the discipline provisions of IDEA 97, their perceptions of the extent to which the discipline provisions impact their ability to maintain a safe school environment, and which areas of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 were perceived by school leaders as having the greatest priority for professional development. Additionally, participants were asked to indicate their employment position, school level, total school enrollment, total enrollment of students with disabilities, as well as their gender and ethnicity of survey responder. The survey instrument is divided into five dimensions with a total of 28 questions.

A choice of response medium was offered. That is, the sample population could either complete the survey online or use a paper-and pencil-version and submit the survey responses through U.S. mail using a stamped, self-addressed envelope. A two-dollar bill was attached to each mailing as a small incentive to encourage participation and monetary drawings were offered to the responders who met the deadline for participation.

The total response rate of the sample population of 300 randomly selected Virginia school leaders was 38% ($n=114$). Data for the three research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics, an analysis of variance ($p<.05$), and reliability and content validity analyses.

Specific Research Question 1: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perception of which areas of the IDEA 97 discipline provisions have the greatest impact on school safety?

Comparisons of the mean scores in response to the survey by school leaders across school levels resulted in no significant differences. Virginia respondents reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 do not negatively impact their ability to maintain a safe school. These results are consistent with a study done by Marnie Shaul in (2001). In this study of secondary school principals, administrators reported that the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 were complex and time-consuming, but were either neutral or positive in their impact on school safety.

This finding was very encouraging to the researcher, considering the literature describing a “dueling perception” regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 (Evans, 1999) and the Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup Poll (2005) reporting a lack of discipline holding the number 3 position as being a great concern to the general public.

School leaders are subject to a great deal of accountability requirements, especially as a result of NCLB. Therefore, it would be understandable if they blamed a less than safe learning environment on the very complex rules and regulations of the discipline provisions of the IDEA 97. However, that was not the case. In fact, Virginia school leaders responding to the survey overall reported no negative impact to school safety due to following the discipline provisions of IDEA 97.

Specific Research Question 2: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their knowledge of the current IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

An ANOVA was used to compare the mean scores of school leaders in response to this question. A significant difference was found in the mean scores of school leaders at different levels. A post hoc analysis using a Tukey HSD followed up on this significant main

effect, and resulted in a significant difference in the mean scores of knowledge between elementary school leaders and middle school leaders. Elementary school leaders reported a significantly lower knowledge level of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 than did middle school leaders.

This difference suggests that the need for refined and differentiated preparation in school leadership programs and professional development activities. School leadership program developers should be aware of these perceptions and respond to the needs of school leaders through rigorous content standards at institutions of higher learning. For example, currently, no institution of higher learning in Virginia requires that school administrators seeking a licensure program for the principalship complete a course in special education law.

Over 6 million students with disabilities are served in America's public schools (U.S. DOE, 2002a). Students with disabilities make up approximately 12% of the student enrollment. It is essential that school leaders complete several courses in special education to include law, curriculum, behavior modification, and psychology of the exceptional child and family as a means to provide responsive leadership to such a large population of America's resources.

Specific Research Question 3: Do school leaders at different levels (i.e., elementary school, middle school, high school) differ in their perceptions of professional development needs concerning the IDEA 97 discipline provisions?

School leaders across levels reported mean scores that demonstrated no significant difference when compared using an ANOVA. Despite a significant difference in knowledge, the mean scores pointed to a positive need for professional development in all areas of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. The areas with the most positive mean scores for

professional development were in the areas of Manifestation Determination Review and Authority of School Personnel.

These findings are consistent with the extant literature on professional development of school leaders (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Patterson et al., 2000; Sage & Burello, 1994; Shaul, 2001) and demonstrate that school leaders in Virginia who responded to the survey recognize the complexity of the discipline provisions and the importance of ensuring that students with disabilities are afforded protections outlined in those provisions.

Discussion, Implications, and Applications of Research Findings

The findings from this research hold important implications for Virginia school leaders. First, results demonstrated that the Virginia school leaders responding to this survey hold overall positive perceptions of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. They do not perceive the provisions as having a negative impact on their ability to maintain school safety. This finding holds great promise for students with disabilities and their access to strong educational outcomes.

Several strands of inquiry did evolve from the research. Those strands included a lower knowledge level of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97 held by elementary school leaders, and an overall positive perception of the discipline provisions' impact on school safety. The most salient implications from this research lie in the areas of professional development and leadership preparation. What do school leaders know? What do they need to know? How and where should they get the training? These three inquiry strands should be considered for future research implications.

First, school leaders are under a great deal of pressure to maintain safe, orderly learning environments (Rose & Gallup, 2005; Shaul, 2001). Recognizing that the discipline

provisions of IDEA 97, while complex and procedure driven, do not negatively impact school safety, school leaders will not be negatively swayed in their decision making when disciplining students with disabilities, thus providing greater access to FAPE.

Second, school leaders responding to the survey demonstrated a significant difference in knowledge among the different school levels, thus underscoring a need to differentiate the training for school leaders at different levels and to consider more progressive and rigorous training across preparation paths and school assignments.

Third, the sample population of school leaders across school levels reported a need for professional development in the areas of the discipline provisions of IDEA 97. Thus, it is reasonable, considering the absence of clear expectations from the ISLLC standards and the Virginia Code for K-12, as well a lack of mandated curriculum coursework in special education at most institutions of higher learning, that the sample population of Virginia school leaders reported a positive need for additional training in special education discipline provisions. While the extant literature is clear that school leaders need additional training, the literature does not make it clear who should shoulder the responsibility.

This researcher posits that there is a shared responsibility for leadership preparation of our school leaders. Those areas of shared responsibility include (a) ISSLC standards refinement; (b) curriculum planning and course content of leadership preparation programs; (c) school districts' professional development and continuous improvement plans, and (d) school leaders' acceptance of shared responsibility for differentiated professional development.

School leaders are charged with responsively educating all of our children. Those who reported that they are unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities must

seek professional development that will provide them with the framework for responsive leadership for all of our children. Children with disabilities are making steady academic and social gains, as well as gaining increased access to the general curriculum (U.S. DOE, 2002a); however, in the 2000-2001 school year, 41.1% of students ages 14 and older with disabilities dropped out (U.S. DOE, 2003b). Truly committed school leaders must find a way to gain the knowledge and resources they need to meet the challenge of educating all of our children.

School district-level administration and curriculum and instruction leaders have the greatest opportunity to respond to the differentiated professional development needs of their school leaders. By incorporating enhanced and differentiated professional development into system wide continuous improvement plans, the districts loudly voice support for students with disabilities and those leaders who serve them. Additionally, the districts provide a framework for inclusive practices and shared responsibility for educating students with disabilities.

Institutions of higher learning which proclaim academic excellence and powerful leadership preparation programs have a responsibility to reflect on their programs and to require school leaders to complete course work that prepares them to meet the needs of students with disabilities, their teachers and their families. Those courses should focus on special education law, curriculum development for students with disabilities, methodology and adaptations, behavior modification, psychology of children and families of children with disabilities, as well as cultural responsiveness and social implications of poverty's impact on students with disabilities. Certainly, universities and colleges offer these courses; however, not all are required for administrative licensure.

The ISLLC standards must be revised. It is longer acceptable that over 6 million students' individual and unique educational needs are addressed in content embedded in a strand on diversity or school law. The ISLLC standards must address special education specifically. The ISLLC standards drive state requirements for licensing. In turn, state requirements drive curriculum development for leadership preparation at institutions of higher learning that are responsible for developing our leaders of today and tomorrow. Finally, the leaders prepared by our universities and colleges drive the American system of public education for all of our children. Leaders must be prepared.

School leaders have very complex job requirements, and while the generalization of the research findings are limited by the return rate (38%) and the discontinuation of the research in four large urban school districts in the sample population, the findings are supported by the extant literature and hold significant implications for school leaders in several arenas.

In this study, four, large urban areas disallowed completion of the study, which could skew the data dramatically. That is, schools with lower socio-economic indicators and higher levels of disciplinary problems could generate a more significant difference in the way the responders reported concerns toward safety considerations. Thus, not only are the findings important, but what was disallowed to be researched has important implication as well.

As a new director of special education in a small, rural North Carolina school district and having come from a very large Virginia school district with greater urbanization, this researcher is able to see firsthand that the differences between the two school districts are glaring regarding the level of expertise needed to manage the discipline provisions of IDEA

97. Most notable differences lie in who manages the discipline requirements of IDEA 97 and ensures that students with disabilities receive FAPE.

In a small district, the central office personnel manage the intricacies of the discipline requirements of IDEA 97 and special education overall. However, small school districts seldom stay small. Thus, it is incumbent on the central office staff to ensure that continuous professional development occurs in an effort to ensure that school leaders have the knowledge and the autonomy to meet the needs of students with disabilities in their buildings.

In a large urban school district, the complexity, intensity, as well as the frequency of incidences of discipline infractions, greatly surpass those of the small, rural district and must be managed on a more frequent basis by the building school leader. Thus the failure of four large urban districts complying with the request for participation could significantly skew the results and ultimately limit the generalizability of the findings from the research. Moreover, it is reasonable to conjecture that the districts who failed to participate in the research were cautious of the sensitivity aspect of the survey, most notably, school safety. While no school district disclosed that safe-school sensitivity was an issue, conversations with two directors of accountability from two school districts alluded to the issue.

Historically, special education has been managed by the central office experts (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Patterson et al., 2000). However, in today's school climate of standards-based reform, increased accountability for student achievement, and clear expectations by the public for safe, orderly schools, leadership preparation and professional development of school leaders of the 21st century must change, as well (Boscardin, 2005).

Ensuring appropriate educational opportunities for students with disabilities is one of the greatest challenges that public schools face today (DiPaola, Tschannen-Moran & Walther-Thomas, 2004; Monteith, 2000). Research suggests that few school leaders are prepared to provide effective special education leadership. “It is incumbent on universities, professional organizations, and public schools to determine how best to prepare and support principals in their efforts to meet rising public expectations”(DiPaola et al., p. 9). “A primary implication of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is the need for all educators to share in the responsibility for services provided for all students including those with disabilities” (Williams & Katsiyannis, 1998, p. 17). In conjunction with enhanced leadership and professional development in special education law, school leaders must have a working knowledge of research-based instructional practices to include those practices for helping students to manage inappropriate behavior in schools.

One of the most powerful mandates to emerge from IDEA 97 is the use of positive behavioral supports for students with challenging behavior. In many cases, standard disciplinary practices may fail to eliminate the inappropriate behavior or may even exacerbate it, substantiating the need for an FBA (Hendrickson, Conroy, Fox, Gable & Smith, 1999).

“Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBS) is the federal law's preferred strategy for dealing with challenging behaviors of students with disabilities” (Turnbull et al., 2001, p. 11). IDEA 97 requires PBS to be considered in all cases of students whose behavior impedes their learning or the learning of others, reflecting IDEA's preference for use of state-of-the-art technology in special education (Turnbull et al.).

“In the past two decades, positive behavior support (PBS) has emerged from applied behavior analysis (ABA) as a newly fashioned approach to problems of behavioral adaptation” (Dunlap, 2006, p. 58). PBS was developed in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a general strategy of intervention and support, employing concepts and methods from ABA as an approach to enhance an individual's quality of life and reduce problem behaviors (E. Carr et al., as cited in Dunlap). “PBS uses specific strategies for assessment and intervention to ensure that interventions are technically sound. PBS is also process oriented, involving team organization and methods to promote active involvement of stakeholders and the development of contextually appropriate support plans” (Albin, Lucyshyn, Horner, & Flannery, 1996; Bambara, Gomez, Roger, Lohrmann-O'Rourke, & Xin, as cited in Snell, Voorhees, & Chen, 2005).

Embedded in the use of positive behavioral supports is the use of an FBA to determine the function of the behavior that the student displays. Determining the function of the behavior provides greater efficacy for determining a behavior intervention that will help to change the student's behavior (Oswald & Safran, 2003; Safran, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2001).

According to IDEA 97, schools must introduce FBA to address serious and persistent student problems. Specifically, an FBA must be conducted when a student's removal or placement in an alternative setting exceeds 10 days or amounts to a change of placement. Additional requirements including an FBA apply to situations when a student is placed in an alternative setting for 45 days due to a weapon or drug violation or when a due process hearing officer places a student in an alternative placement for behavior that is dangerous to

self or others (Draggow & Yell, 2001). Additionally, NASP (2002) has endorsed the use of FBA procedures with students who have emotional and behavioral disorders.

Describing the function of a behavior in relation to environmental antecedents and consequences has a long history in applied behavior analysis (ABA) drawn from the work of B.F. Skinner (Hartwig, Heathfield, & Jenson, 2004). Skinner described the cause-and-effect relationship between behavior in terms of consequences and stimulus control events (Alberto & Troutman, 2006; Hartwig et al.). This learning principle, known as an operant conditioning model, is used for explaining, predicting, and changing human behavior (Alberto & Troutman).

The purpose of functional behavioral assessment is to provide the IEP team with additional information, analysis, and strategies for addressing undesirable behavior, especially when a behavior is interfering with a child's education (Draggow & Yell, 2001). In 1998, a hearing officer in Independent School District No. 2310 analyzed the federal law and regulations regarding FBAs. She concluded that the FBA process involves some process of identifying the core or “target” behavior; observing the student (perhaps in different environments) and collecting data on the target behavior, antecedents and consequences; formulating a hypothesis about the cause(s) of the behavior; and developing an intervention(s) in changing the behavior (Draggow & Yell).

The literature reflects an increasing reliance on FBAs to develop support plans for decreasing problem behavior (Sugai, Sprague, Horner & Walker, 2000). Additionally, research supports curricular reform as another strategy that lends itself to a range of prevention and early intervention programs that can be used to integrate both academic and behavioral supports for students (Korinek & Popp, 1997; Walther-Thomas et al., 2000).

However, applications with students with emotional and behavioral disorders particularly in the classroom continue to be limited (Hendrickson et al., 1999).

Increasingly, students with learning and behavior problems are being served in general education classes where the academic curriculum usually takes precedence over social skills development or behavioral programming (Korinek & Popp, 1997). “Recent school violence is a sobering reminder of the harm that can result when students feel disconnected and disenfranchised” (Walther-Thomas, Korinek, & McLaughlin, 1999, p. 6).

School leaders must ensure that personnel involved in implementing FBAs have the necessary training and expertise. Public schools will be well served if this technology is implemented in a proactive manner to deal with serious and chronic maladaptive behaviors. Not only will such measures maximize the prospect of developing successful interventions, but they may also provide documentation of efforts if a due process hearing is initiated. Most important, FBAs and BIPs, properly conducted and developed, will result in skill-based programming designed to improve the educational experiences, educational outcomes, and lives of students with problem behaviors (Drasgow & Yell, 2001).

Enhanced professional development in special education law and the use of positive behavior supports and its integration into a rigorous and challenging general curriculum arena driven by team-based collaboration will serve our school leaders and those they lead well. Under NCLB, all means all. Exclusionary practices of removals and suspensions of students with disabilities not only fail to change challenging behavior, in many ways they exacerbate it (Hendrickson et al., 1999; Horner & Sugai, 2002).

School leaders must build a repertoire of leadership skills that recognize the potential and contribution of every student and must use research-based methodology to provide a

rigorous and responsive educational experience for every student in America's schools. School leaders in the 21st century, now more than ever before, are charged with providing responsive leadership. Leadership that is inspired, prepared, responsive, and accountable for every child.

With this charge come a flux of responsibilities and the need for competencies in the areas of school leadership, curriculum and instruction, school law, cultural and community responsiveness, and school and social reform initiatives. Moreover school leaders must be responsive to students' unique learning and behavioral needs, as well as be knowledgeable about researched-based methodologies and refined collaboration skills.

Imagine for a moment a time when all school leaders have the training to ensure a rigorous and rich academic experience to children with disabilities. Refinement of the ISLLC standards to specifically address special education, enhanced licensure requirements for all school leaders. general and special, with strategic refinement of leadership preparation programming, school districts providing systemic professional development, as well as school leaders accepting that all means all and securing the differentiated professional development they need ensures that picture from our imaginations becomes real and common place. Enhanced and continuous leadership preparation that is tailored to meet the needs of our school leaders of today and tomorrow will serve our children, our community, and our nation as we deserve.

Recommendations for Future Research

1. Replication of this study on a representative national level would provide more comprehensive data for comparative purposes to confirm if there are geographic or

regional differences among school leaders' perceptions and would increase the generalizability of the findings.

2. Replication of this study with a larger sample population in Virginia would likely increase the number of responders to the survey, thereby strengthening the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, analyses comparing years of experience, gender, urbanization of districts, and ethnicity of school leaders would provide additional data for comparison and possibly provide insight into the need for differentiation in school leadership preparation and professional development.
3. A nationwide study of school leaders' perception of their preparation and certification programs at the university level would assist in determining if these programs are adequately preparing school leaders for their responsibilities with regards to the discipline of students with disabilities.
4. A qualitative analysis of school leader preparation and certification programs using archival data (curricula, syllabi, course descriptions) at the university level would assist in determining if these programs are adequately preparing school leaders for their responsibilities in regards to special education administration.
5. To increase return rates to the web-based survey, it is recommended that personalization in the research methodology be increased (Dillman & Tortora, 1998). The methodology of this research called for a personal contact either through email or phone to each school to ensure that the name of the principal was accurate for the mailing. A recommendation would be to speak to each school leader to personalize the request for compliance.

6. Additionally, ensuring that the protocols for research are followed in each school district would likely increase participation rates. This research was terminated in four large school districts due to not following research protocols, and those terminations resulted in lower return rates, limitations to the generalizability of the study and a great deal more work for the researcher to reach the required N for analysis.
7. Any replication of this research should include a phone call to the director of accountability to discuss options for making the research more interesting to the school district and to personalize the interactions. Ultimately, it is the people who hold these positions who make the final approval of the research.
8. A qualitative study examining school leaders' practices, policies and procedures regarding the use of FBAs, BIPs, and PBS would add to the literature base.
9. A qualitative study examining archival data using student IEPs may provide additional data to begin to tailor professional development needs surrounding the FBA and BIP development process.

Summary

This study confirms that Virginia school leaders participating in this study require additional professional development and leadership preparation in the areas of special education discipline provisions to effectively maintain safe orderly schools that are responsive to student needs and to ensure that students with disabilities are afforded a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. It is imperative that educational administrators and policy makers at the state, local and university level collaborate to meet the needs of the 21st century school leader in Virginia.

In the best-case scenarios, administrators are well prepared for special education leadership as a result of previous teaching and internship experience and advanced preparation. Comprehensive preparation facilitates a strong working knowledge of IDEA policies and procedures, a sound understanding of disabilities awareness and characteristics, some of the unique learning and behavior challenges various conditions present, as well as a comprehensive knowledge of research-based practices (Crockett, 2002; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; DiPaola et al., 2004; Giacobbe et al., 2001).

To further ensure that school leaders of the 21st century meet the demands in a NCLB era, continuous and differentiated professional development must ensue. Special education law is the most litigated area of school law. Case law drives much policy and procedural changes, and it is important to ensure that school leaders receive with timely and responsive professional development to help them meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Our students deserve it.

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Discipline Survey
1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act (IDEA)

The purpose of this survey is to gather data concerning 1) school leaders' perceptions about the impact of the IDEA discipline provisions on the ability to maintain a safe school; 2) the extent of school leaders' knowledge regarding the discipline provisions of IDEA; and 3) school leaders' perceptions regarding needs for professional development. Findings from this research will hold implications for school leadership preparation and recommendations for building level administrators. All responses will be maintained confidentially. If you have questions, I can be reached in the following ways:

Work: 757-437-4842; Home: 757-436-2143; or Email: chworley@vbschools.com or cwrly@cox.net

Please complete your survey and release of information online at <http://www.wmdocentral.com> by May 1, 2005 to be entered into a **\$50.00 drawing**,

or

Complete your survey on paper and return it and the release of information in a self-addressed envelope and have it postmarked by May 1, 2005, to be entered into a **\$25.00 drawing**.

Charlotte H. Worley, Doctoral Candidate
853 North Haven Circle
Chesapeake, VA 23322

The school leader (principal or assistant principal) primarily responsible for supervising special education services should complete this survey.

Name of Respondent: _____

Position of the School Leader Completing Survey: _____

School Level: Elementary _____ Middle _____ High _____

Gender of Respondent: Female _____ Male _____

Ethnicity/Race of Respondent: _____

School Division Name: _____

Total Building Enrollment: _____

Total Number of Students with Disabilities: _____

Email Address: _____@_____

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (PHONE: 757-221-3901) ON FEBRUARY 24, 2005 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 23, 2006.

DISCIPLINE PROVISIONS in the 1997 REAUTHORIZATION of the INDIVIDUALS with DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) DIRECTIONS: Please read each provision carefully and answer the following questions for each provision: First: To what extent do you perceive the impact of this provision on your ability to maintain a safe school environment? Second: To what extent do you rate your knowledge of this provision? Third: To what extent do you perceive the priority for professional development to effectively manage this provision?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Extent of knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage 				
		VERY POSITIVE (VP) VERY HIGH (VH) VERY HIGH (VH)	SOMEWHAT POSITIVE (SP) SOMEWHAT HIGH (SH) SOMEWHAT HIGH (SH)	NO IMPACT (NI) MODERATE (M) MODERATE (M)	SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE (SN) SOMEWHAT LOW (SL) SOMEWHAT LOW (SL)	VERY NEGATIVE (VN) VERY LOW (VL) VERY LOW (VL)
1.	A student with a disability can be suspended for up to 10 school days for any violation of school rules to the extent removal would be applied to a student without a disability. <i>Section 520 (a)(1)(i)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5
2.	A student with a disability can be placed in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for no more than 45 days for carrying a weapon to school or to a school function. <i>Section 520 (a)(2)(i)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5
3.	A student with a disability can be placed in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for no more than 45 days for possessing, selling, or using drugs while at school or a school function. <i>Section 520 (a)(2)(ii)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5
4.	If a student with a disability is suspended for more than 10 days in a school year, services must be provided on the 11 th day to the extent necessary to enable the student progress in the general curriculum and achieve the goals in the IEP. <i>Section 121(d)(2)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5
5.	A hearing officer may place a student with a disability in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days if the school has demonstrated by substantial evidence that maintaining the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others. <i>Section 521(a)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5
6.	A hearing officer may place a student with a disability in an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days if the school has made reasonable efforts to minimize the risk of harm in the current school placement, including the use of supplementary aids and services. <i>Section 521(c)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1 1 1	2 2 2	3 3 3	4 4 4	5 5 5

	VP			SP			NP			SN			VN		
	VA	HA	VH	SA	HA	SH	NA	MA	NH	SA	HA	SH	VA	HA	VH
7. Either before, but no later than 10 business days after removing the student for more than 10 days in the school year, the IEP team must conduct a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior plan to address the behavior if one has not previously been conducted. <i>Section 520(b)(1)(i)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
8. If a student has a current behavior plan, the IEP team must review the plan and modify as necessary either before or no later than 10 business days after removing the student for more than 10 days in a school year. <i>Section 520(b)(1)(ii)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
9. Immediately, if possible, but no later than 10 school days after the decision has been made to remove a student with a disability for more than 10 days in a school year, a manifestation determination review must be conducted to determine the relationship between the student's disability and the misconduct. <i>Section 523(a)(2)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
10. In conducting a manifestation review, the IEP team and other qualified personnel must consider the evaluation and the diagnostic results. <i>Section 523(c)(1)(i)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
11. In conducting a manifestation review, the IEP team and other qualified personnel must consider relevant information supplied by the parent. <i>Section 523 (c)(1)(i)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
12. In conducting a manifestation review, the IEP team and other qualified personnel must consider observations of the student. <i>Section 523 (c)(1)(iii)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
13. In conducting a manifestation review, the IEP team and other qualified personnel must consider the IEP and current placement of the student. <i>Section 523 (c)(1)(iii)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		
	1			2			3			4			5		

14. If the IEP team determines that the behavior was not a manifestation of the student's disability, the student can be disciplined in the same manner as a regular education student (except the school must provide educational services on the 11 th day of removal from school consistent with the IEP goals and progress in the general curriculum). <i>Section 524(a)121 (d)(2)(i)</i>	VP	VH	SH	NI	SL	VN
	VP	VH	SH	NI	SL	VN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
15. Parents may challenge a manifestation determination or any decision regarding placement with a right to an expedited due process hearing. <i>Section 525(a)(1)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
16. Expedited due process hearings must result in a written decision being mailed to parties within 45 days from the request for such hearing. No exceptions or extensions. <i>Section 528(2)(b)(1)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
17. When a parent requests a hearing to challenge the disciplinary placement in an interim alternative educational setting (IAES) or a manifestation determination, the student will remain in the IAES pending the decision of the hearing officer or until the expiration of the 45day period, whichever occurs first. <i>Section 526(a)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
18. The student with a disability shall remain in an IAES if the school requests an expedited hearing and maintains that it is dangerous for the child to be in the current placement (placement prior to removal to the IAES) pending the outcome of the hearing. <i>Section 526(b)(1)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
19. Students not yet eligible for special education services may assert IDEA protections if it is shown that the school district had knowledge that the student had a disability before the behavior incident. <i>Section 527(a)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
20. The district is deemed to have knowledge the student had a disability if the parent had requested in writing that the child was in need of special education services. <i>Section 527(d)(2)(ii)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
21. The district is deemed to have knowledge the student had a disability if the parent has requested an evaluation. <i>Section 527(b)(2)</i>						
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on maintaining a safe school Knowledge Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision 	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	
	1	2	3	4	5	

	VP VH VH			SP SH SH			NI M M			SN SL SL			VN VL VL		
22. The district is deemed to have knowledge the student had a disability if the performance or the behavior of the student demonstrated the need for special education. <i>Section 527(b)(3)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
23. The district is deemed to have knowledge the student had a disability if the teacher or other school personnel have expressed concerns about performance or behavior to the director of special education or other personnel of the agency. <i>Section 527(b)(4)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
24. If the district does not "have knowledge" that the student had a disability, the student may be disciplined in the same manner as a regular education student. <i>Section 527(d)(1)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
25. If a parent requests an evaluation of the child during the suspension or expulsion, it must be conducted in an expedited manner. <i>Section 527(d)(2)(i)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
26. Until an initial evaluation is complete the student shall remain in the educational placement deemed appropriate by the school authorities which can include suspension or expulsion, it must be conducted in an expedited manner. <i>Section 527(d)(2)(ii)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
27. Nothing in IDEA prohibits a district from reporting a crime committed by a student with a disability to appropriate authorities. <i>Section 520(b)(1)(i)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		
28. A district reporting a crime committed by students with disabilities shall provide copies of special education and discipline records to whom it reports the crime only to the extent permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. <i>Section 523(a)(3)</i>															
• Impact on maintaining a safe school	1			2			3			4			5		
• Knowledge	1			2			3			4			5		
• Need for professional development to effectively manage the provision	1			2			3			4			5		

This survey instrument is modeled after a survey instrument developed by Dr. Kimberly Bias for her 2002 dissertation concerning school leaders' knowledge and perceptions regarding the discipline provisions of the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

April 1, 2005

Dear Virginia School Leader:

As a doctoral candidate at The College of William and Mary, I am conducting survey research on the knowledge level of school leaders regarding the discipline provisions in the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, the perception of school leaders concerning the impact of those provisions on their ability to maintain a safe school, and which areas school leaders perceive as having the greatest need for staff development of administrators. The survey data will be analyzed to provide the basis for recommendations for school leadership preparation and licensure to the State Board of Education. Toward that end, I am asking you to participate in a research study.

Please take a few minutes to complete the enclosed survey or if you prefer, the survey and release of information is located online at www.wmdoccentral.com. Besides the \$2.00 bill attached to this letter, there is a potential for a small compensation to you for participating in this survey. However, in no way do these compensations reflect my deep appreciation for your time spent completing this survey.

If you return the completed survey and release of information in the enclosed self-addressed envelope and it is postmarked by May 1, 2005, your name will be entered into a \$25.00 drawing. If you elect to complete the survey and release of information online at www.wmdoccentral.com by May 1, 2005, your name will be entered into a \$50.00 drawing.

There are no anticipated risks, further compensation, or other direct benefits to you for your voluntary participation. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without consequence. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, please contact me at (757) 436-2143 (HM) or (757) 437-4842 (WK). If you prefer, I can be reached by email charlotte.worley@vbschools.com or cwrly@cox.net. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the Human Subjects Review Committee at goefriss@wm.edu.

Please sign and return a copy of this letter denoting permission to use your input and whether or not you would like to receive a copy of the results, or if completing the survey online, check the appropriate boxes giving consent and desire/lack of desire for a copy of the results. Your consideration and potential investment of your valuable time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Charlotte H. Worley
Doctoral Candidate
The College of William and Mary

Release of Information

Participant Name _____ Date _____

_____ I have read the procedures described above. _____ I voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

_____ I would like to receive a copy of the results described above at the following email address:

_____@_____.

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (PHONE: 757-221-3901) ON FEBRUARY 24, 2005 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 23, 2006.

Appendix C
Charlotte H. Worley, Doctoral Candidate
The College of William and Mary
853 North Haven Circle
Chesapeake, Virginia 23322

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March 8, 2004

Dear Virginia School Leader:

As a doctoral candidate at The College of William and Mary, I am conducting survey research on the perceptions of school leaders concerning the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act discipline provisions and the impact of those provisions on the ability to maintain a safe school. The data will be analyzed to provide recommendations for school leadership preparation and for licensure requirements to the State Board of Education. Toward that end, I am asking you participate in a pilot study.

Please take a few moments to complete the enclosed survey and validity questionnaire, as well as permission to use your input. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete. The \$2.00 bill attached to this letter is a small compensation to you for participating in this pilot survey, but in no way measures my deep gratitude for your investment of time. Please return the survey, permission form, and validity questionnaire by March 15, 2005, in the self-addressed envelope.

There are no anticipated risks, further compensation, or other direct benefits to you for your voluntary participation. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without consequence. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, please contact me at (757) 437-4842 or email chworley@vbschools.com or cwrly@cox.net. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the Human Subjects Review Committee at goefriss@wm.edu.

Please sign and return a copy of this letter in self-addressed envelop denoting permission to use your input and whether or not you would like to receive a copy of the pilot results along with your survey responses and the validity questionnaire. Your consideration and potential investment of your valuable time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Charlotte H. Worley
Doctoral Candidate
The College of William and Mary

Participant Name _____ Date _____

_____ I have read the procedures described above.

_____ I voluntarily agree to participate in the pilot study.

_____ I would like to receive a copy of the pilot results described above a the following email address:

_____@_____.

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (PHONE: 757-221-3901) ON FEBRUARY 24, 2005 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 23, 2006.

Charlotte H. Worley, Doctoral Candidate
The College of William and Mary
853 North Haven Circle
Chesapeake, Virginia 23322

March 8, 2005

Dear Virginia School Leader:

As a doctoral candidate at The College of William and Mary, I am conducting survey research on the perceptions of school leaders concerning the 1997 Reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the impact on the ability to provide a safe learning environment. The data will be analyzed to provide recommendations for school leadership preparation and licensure requirements to the State Board of Education. Toward that end, I am asking you participate in a pilot study.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey online at www.wmdoccentral.com by March 15, 2005. The survey should take 10-15 minutes to complete online. The \$2.00 bill attached to this letter is a small compensation to you for participating in this pilot survey, but in no way measures my gratitude for your investment of your valuable time.

There are no anticipated risks, further compensation, or other direct benefits to you for your voluntary participation. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time without consequence. All individual responses will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions or comments about this research, please contact me at (757) 437-4842 or email chworley@vbschools.com or cwrly@cox.net. Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to the Human Subjects Review Committee at goefriss@wm.edu.

Please denote permission to use your input and whether or not you would like to receive a copy of the pilot results by checking the appropriate boxes giving consent and desire/lack of desire for a copy of the pilot results online. To gather data on the validity of the questions and the ease of the survey, please complete the validity survey as well and return it in the self-addressed envelope. Your consideration and potential investment of your valuable time is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Charlotte H. Worley
Doctoral Candidate
The College of William and Mary

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (PHONE: 757-221-3901) ON FEBRUARY 24, 2005 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 23, 2006.

Validity Questions

Dear Virginia School Leader:

Thank you for participating in the pilot study for my dissertation.

Please keep the following questions in mind as you read the questionnaire. If you have any suggestions or recommendations, please include them in your review.

Sincerely,

Charlotte H. Worley, Doctoral Candidate

Language Usage:

1) Are the questions worded concisely and meaningful enough in order to convey the necessary information to the participants? If not, please include the number of the question and any recommend any changes you would make.

Vocabulary:

2). Is the terminology usage clear? If not, please include the number of the question and recommend changes.

Format:

3) Are there any questions that seem redundant? If so, please include the number of the question and recommend changes.

Technology: (Only answer if you are participating in the web-based survey.)

4) Is the web-based survey easily navigated? If not, please provide descriptors of the problems that you faced.

From: Denise Ridley-Hinrichs [drridl@wm.edu] Sent: Thursday, February 24, 2005 3:14 PM To: cwrly@cox.net Cc: tjward@wm.edu; mrdesc@wm.edu; dmanos@as.wm.edu; mfdipa@wm.edu; cacorb@wm.edu Subject: SOE Committee Approval of #2005004

Dear Ms. Worley: Your proposal titled "An Investigation of Virginia School Leaders' Perceptions of the Impact of the IDEA" has been exempted from formal review by the School of Education Internal Review Committee (SOE IRC) because it falls under one of six exemption categories defined by DHHS Federal Regulations 45CFR 46.101.b. Please insert the following statement in the the footer of any cover letters, consent forms, etc.:

THIS PROJECT WAS FOUND TO COMPLY WITH APPROPRIATE ETHICAL STANDARDS AND WAS EXEMPTED FROM THE NEED FOR FORMAL REVIEW BY THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS COMMITTEE (PHONE: 757- 221-3901) ON FEBRUARY 24, 2005 AND EXPIRES ON FEBRUARY 23, 2006. You are required to notify Dr. Thomas Ward, Chair of the SOE IRC (221- 2358 or tjward@wm.edu), and Dr. Michael Deschenes, Chair of the Protection of Human Subjects Committee (221-2778 or mrdesc@wm.edu), if any issues arise with the participants of this study. Cordially, Denise

~~~~~ Denise Ridley-Hinrichs, MBA Associate Director, Grants & Research Administration College of William and Mary PO Box 8795, Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795 Phone: (757) 221-3901 Fax: (757) 221-4910 email: drridl@wm.edu

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